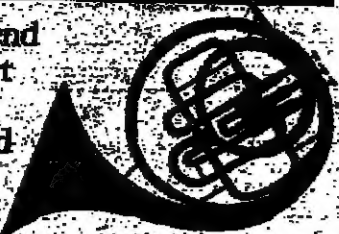


MUSICAL BONUS

Take a friend to a concert for 30p. Details and token. **PAGE 36**



The digital battleground

The £2 billion fight for new Army technology Interface. **PAGE 8**

WIN TICKETS

For Scotland versus England at Murrayfield. **PAGE 44**

Made to flatter

An exclusive look at Jasper Conran's Autumn collection. **P16**

Family ties of fear

Nigella Lawson on genetic clues to breast cancer. **PAGE 17**

Summit to set target for talks

Ulster peace process to be relaunched

By Philip Webster, Nicholas Watt and Nicholas Wood

JOHN MAJOR and John Bruton were trying last night to clear away obstacles to a London summit that could breathe life into the Northern Ireland peace process today.

Differences over the way a target date for all-party talks should be announced led to frantic negotiations between officials, and the two leaders had to delay the telephone call confirming that the summit would go ahead.

Dublin wanted to set a firm date for talks, while London preferred to say that they would start a set number of weeks after the parties agreed the format for the elections in Northern Ireland to pick negotiating teams for the talks.

The heart of the communiqué to be issued today will be plans for "proximity talks", a Dayton-style peace conference at which the parties will talk through a mediator, to be followed by the elections.

Both sides hope that the agreement will persuade the IRA to stop their bombing campaign so that Sinn Féin can take part in the talks and improve its chances in the elections. The form of the ballot is being left to the parties to decide, and the two Unionist parties have "quite different ideas on how they should proceed."

Yesterday Mr Major met the SDLP leader John Hume, who declared the peace process firmly back on track. He said: "A very positive approach has been made by Mr Major. We believe that when a firm date is fixed for all-party

talks, then the ceasefire will be restored." And in Dublin, Mr Bruton told the Irish Parliament that the views of the two governments were converging on agreeing a date and that he was working towards a summit as soon as possible.

But Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin expressed caution over the prospects. He said: "A new peace process must be rooted in clear unambiguous public assurances that all-party talks will begin by a fixed specified date as soon as possible, within an agreed timeframe and without preconditions."

As preparations for the summit went ahead, however, the argument over how the proposed elections should be run led to claims that the Ulster Unionists had tried to blackmail the Prime Minister into backing their favoured system before the Commons

vote on the Scott report on Monday. David Trimble was said to have offered to prop up the Government for 12 months in return for certain concessions, but the Unionist leader fiercely denied the allegation. He said ministers who spread the reports were telling lies and accused the Government of having something to hide.

The nine official Unionists voted with the Opposition on Monday, and Mr Trimble said yesterday: "We don't expect ministers, because they're disappointed at the way we vote on a particular issue, to be rushing out afterwards with highly prejudicial comments of dubious accuracy. It is a petty form of revenge by small-minded people."

Mr Trimble had himself been suspicious that the Government had struck a deal with the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists, a suggestion denied by Mr Major and Sir Patrick Mayhew, and the row that followed the vote has worsened relations between the two Unionist groups.

Mr Paisley accused Mr Trimble of "shooting himself in the foot" and said he would be condemned for claiming to stand for morality and decency in government by voting with Labour, having spent hours trying to get a deal to suit his party interests. "I

Continued on page 2, col 3

Great escape, page 8
Simon Jenkins, page 18
Leading article and letters, page 19



"Are you quite sure you want to call him Scott?"



The late Duke of Atholl on parade with his private army, the Atholl Highlanders

Duke of Atholl dies, but his successor turns down the title

By Alan Hamilton and Inigo Gilmore

BRITAIN'S only bachelor duke died yesterday, leaving his castle and 70,000-acre Highland estate to a charitable trust and his title to a third cousin living in South Africa who does not want it.

The tenth Duke of Atholl, who was 64, had been in hospital in Perth since suffering a stroke last December. Because he had no immediate heirs, the title passes to John Murray, 67, a retired land surveyor from the Northern Province, who, despite the distance of his family connection, is the next in the male line. Mr Murray said last night he had decided never to use the title.

During his only visit to Blair Castle, two years ago, Mr Murray made plain that he had no wish to abandon the sunshine of South Africa for the wet heather and bracing cold of Scotland. Yesterday, at his home in Tzaneen, near the Mozambique border, Mr Murray said that he felt no bitterness at acquiring a title but no land. "I never harboured any aspirations to inherit the estate; I am happy that the land has gone into a charitable trust."

Mr Murray confessed to not even owning a kilt and rarely drinking whisky. He said that his adult sons Bruce and Craig probably had more affinity with Scotland than he did. Both were members of the Transvaal Scottish, a South African part-time regiment founded by an ancestor in 1902. "I am a South African and would not want to go and live anywhere else," Mr Murray said.

Representatives of the late duke said yesterday that he had first drawn up plans to put Blair Castle, his 120-room family seat, and a vast surrounding swath of Perthshire north of Pitlochry in trust ten

years ago. The plans had been completed during his illness. They dismissed reports that the duke had deliberately disinherited his successor because, on their rare meetings, the two did not get on.

Rosemary Walker, spokeswoman for the Atholl estates, said: "The late duke handed over the estates to a charitable trust to ensure that they remained as an entity, for the sake of the people who work and live on them. He could have sold Atholl to anyone for millions, but he signed away



Murray: he has decided not to use his new title

his fortune for the good of the area and did not make a penny."

George Iain Murray was best known as colonel-in-chief of Europe's last private army. The Atholl Highlanders, a 90-strong corps of estate workers and Highland nobility, was created in 1844 by Queen Victoria and now parades twice a year as the duke's personal bodyguard. Its future is uncertain.

Blair Castle and the Atholl Highlanders are one of Perthshire's leading tourist attractions, with 165,000 paying visitors last year.

Obituary, page 21

Pat Smythe dies aged 67

Pat Smythe, the heroine of British showjumping in the 1950s, died in hospital yesterday. She was 67.

In 1956 she was the first woman to ride in the showjumping events at the Olympic Games and won a bronze medal. She won the Royal International Horse Show supreme championship four times.

Obituary, page 21

Labour promises schools overhaul

Labour has called for a drastic overhaul of comprehensive education so that bright pupils would be encouraged to forge ahead and the less able would be given extra help.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, presented a damning picture of the existing comprehensive schools.

Page 2

Briton killed in Russian gunfight

By Richard Preston, Stephen Farrell and Andrew Pierce

A BRITISH solicitor was killed in a crossfire during a Russian mafia killing at a five-star hotel in St Petersburg.

John Hyden, 41, was hit in the head when two killers, armed with Kalashnikov rifles, burst into the Nevsky Palace Hotel and sprayed the coffee shop with up to 60 bullets.

Mr Hyden, who runs the Moscow office of the London solicitors Sinclair, Roche & Temperley, died instantly. His wife, Patricia, had returned to their Edinburgh home 10 days ago for the 21st birthday celebrations of her daughter, Heather, by her first marriage.

The killers' intended target, a prominent local businessman, was seriously wounded. Two off-duty policemen, who were working as his body-

guards, died in the attack at 4.20pm on Monday.

Natasha Belik, the public relations manager of the £300-a-night hotel, said: "The Englishman was unlucky. He was not staying in the Nevsky Palace. He was sitting by himself in the corner of the coffee shop when the gunman opened fire. He was well away from the attack but was hit in the head by a stray bullet."

Mr Hyden studied modern history at Pembroke College, Oxford, before taking a law degree at Glasgow University in 1979. He was fluent in German and Russian and had an Army background before entering private law practice in Scotland in 1988.

He worked for two Scottish legal firms before moving to Sinclair Roche & Temperley in 1994. He moved to Russia 18

months ago to head the company's new Moscow operation advising local businessmen how to trade with Western companies. He had gone to St Petersburg seven weeks ago as a legal adviser to the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development.

Mr and Mrs Hyden married three years ago and had no children. They were visited in Russia by Mrs Hyden's three children from a previous marriage, Keith, Flavia, 26, Graeme, 23 and Heather.

Mary Flisken, a relative by marriage, spoke to Mrs Hyden on Sunday, 24 hours before the shooting. "She was talking about the lovely architecture in Russia and she seemed to be perfectly happy. She didn't say anything about the dangers."

Colleagues at Sinclair

Roche & Temperley heard about the tragedy simultaneously from Mrs Hyden and the Foreign Office. Struan Robertson, a partner in the company, said: "He was remarkably bright. We would have been talking about him as a partner."

Russians have become used to almost daily gangland turf fights. The violence frequently spills over into expensive hotels frequented by Russia's new generation of entrepreneurs, the "buzinismeni".

For St Petersburg the shooting in one of the city's most prestigious hotels could not have come at a worse time. It has been working hard to promote itself as a possible contender for the summer Olympics in 2004.

Mob violence grows, page 13

Norwegian firm may buy Cunard

By Alasdair Murray

LOSS-MAKING Trafalgar House, which owns the Cunard cruise line, disclosed yesterday that it had begun talks over a possible takeover.

Trafalgar, which made losses of £321 million last year, said it had received an approach from Kvaerner, the Norwegian engineering and construction company, which owns the Covan shipyard in Scotland. A deal between the two would raise doubts over the future of Cunard. The ocean liner company made losses of around £120 million last year and was publicly humiliated after a botched refit of the QE2.

Representatives of the late duke said yesterday that he had first drawn up plans to put Blair Castle, his 120-room family seat, and a vast surrounding swath of Perthshire north of Pitlochry in trust ten

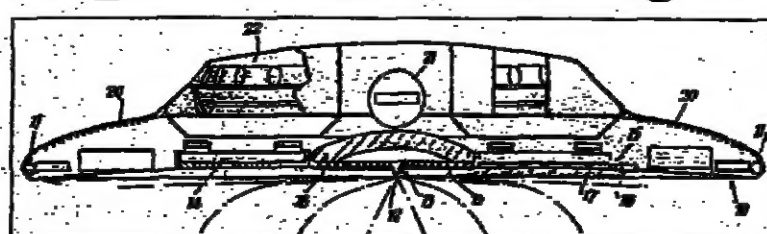
Bid expected, page 25

BR's spaceship is still standing on cloud nine

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

BRITISH RAIL apologises for the late running of its service to Mars, delayed by technical difficulties. But if the flying saucer patented in 1973 did get out of the sidings it would put Eurostar in the shade.

The "space vehicle", powered by thermonuclear fusion, promised economic, high-speed travel to distant parts of the solar system. Anyone planning a star service trip would, however, have risked being permanently late for work. David Wardell, editor of *Inventor's World* magazine, who discovered the design at the Patent Office in Newport, South Wales, said



Charles Osmond Frederick's spaceship, patented by British Rail

that passengers would have been exposed to lethal amounts of radiation. "It seems extraordinary that the British Railways Board should have patented a spaceship, but this patent was developed and amended over a num-

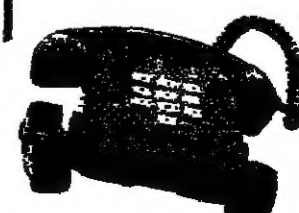
ber of years so they must have thought there was something in it," he said. Charles Osmond Frederick, who worked for British Rail in Derby, developed the "lifting platform" design in 1970. The full specification, filed in

March 1972 and published a year later, calls the invention a space vehicle.

The passenger compartment was on the upper deck, isolated from the engine by a radiation shield. The craft would have been propelled by small thermonuclear explosions at a rate of 1,000 a second, providing the smooth ride BR customers have come to expect.

British Rail had a down-to-earth explanation for its patent, however. It was all Mr Frederick's idea, and any employees who invented things had to patent them in the company's name so that they did not benefit personally from work done in the firm's time, a spokesman said. "BR never had any interest in space travel."

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The straw that may have broken the sheep owner's back



Davies: an angry man

QUENTIN DAVIES was nowhere to be seen in the Commons Chamber yesterday. Mr Davies (C, Stamford & Spalding) had voted against the Government in the Scott debate, and may have been in hiding for his own safety.

Hours before, and early in that debate, he had said: "I have no wish at all to deprive the Government of an extremely able minister [William Waldegrave]... but I am afraid that he must take responsibility for that mistake. It must be made clear that someone is taking responsibility."

He was the target of Mr Davies's particular anger; anger that those watching him could see was genuine.

Few can have realised quite how indignant Mr Davies feels on the subject of taking responsibility. Indeed it is conceivable (though we have no reason to suppose it true) that Mr Davies could have been lectured personally by Mr Waldegrave on the subject.

This is because, some time after Mr Davies was fined for cruelty to sheep, the man who became Minister of Agriculture was William Waldegrave. Let me explain. The sheep in



MATTHEW PARRIS POLITICAL SKETCH



question had been starved. How so? Nobody who knows this sensitive and considerate MP could imagine for a moment that Quentin Davies is personally capable of incivility to a solitary ewe, let alone brutality to a whole flock of sheep.

But you do not have to be, to be convicted under the 1911 Protection of Animals Act. Under its provisions, "if any person shall (a) cruelly beat,

kick, ill-treat, over-ride, over-drive, overload, torture, infuriate or terrify any animal... or, being the owner, permit any animal" to be treated in this way, then he may be guilty of an offence.

Further clauses provide that an owner may be deemed to have "permitted" cruelty without even having known about it. Others may actually have been at fault.

We may be sure that this

was the case on the Lincolnshire estate of Mr Davies, who is a merchant banker. But he was the owner of the sheep. He was ultimately in charge, so he had to take responsibility. The result was a £1,500 fine, a week of dreadful publicity, five years of having to endure baa, baa noises from the Labour Party whenever he rises to speak in the Commons, and sheep puns for the rest of his life.

Poor man. Picture the scene (it is purely imaginary) as Mr Davies sobs into his brandy in the Members' smoking-room. Will they never stop bleating at him? The new Minister of

Agriculture leans over. "Ah well, Quentin," says William Waldegrave. In... that commanding All Souls way of his. "I know a bit about farming."

"All of us, in life, sometimes do have to take responsibility for mishaps which are not our fault. White man's burden, old chap. On the farm, responsibility need not imply culpability."

What hope can a chap have of being made a minister if your arrival at the dispatch box could trigger an outbreak of baa-ing?

Condemned to the backbenches, is it fanciful to

suppose that, as he read through Scott's 1,800 pages, discovering allegation after allegation of error — errors even more shocking than the mistreatment of sheep — all airily dismissed with the remark that the minister himself did not realise what had gone wrong, a certain sourness began to infect Mr Davies's mood?

Is it impossible to believe that a fellow whose every rising in the Chamber was greeted by Labour bleats and Tory giggles might hear the supportive cheers which now greet Mr Waldegrave... and flip?

Labour makes appeal to middle classes

Blunkett backs fast-track system in comprehensives

By DAVID CHARTER
AND JILL SHERMAN

LABOUR called for a drastic overhaul of comprehensive education yesterday so that bright pupils would be encouraged to forge ahead of their peers and the less able would be given extra help.

David Blunkett, Shadow Education Secretary, presented a damning picture of Britain's comprehensive schools, suggesting that in too many cases they were failing pupils. Emphasising that a Labour government would promote diversity rather than mediocrity, he set out a vision of comprehensive schools with "fast tracking... to foster the strengths of every child."

In an effort to rescue the party's education policy after the Harriet Harman affair, when Labour had to reaffirm its opposition to selection, Mr Blunkett made a blatant appeal to middle-class parents who claim the comprehensive system is failing their children.

"Diversity within one campus must be the goal of a truly comprehensive system, diversity which enables schools to find and foster the strengths of every single child. That can and should mean setting by ability in different subjects, fast tracking where appropriate and extra support for those

"The essential point is that all children should have an equal opportunity of acquiring intelligence, and of developing their talents and abilities to the full" — Edward Boyle, Conservative Minister for Education, arguing for comprehensive schools in 1963.

"What a feeble fallacy to suggest that able children lose by sharing their schools with others less able than themselves" — Anthony Crosland, Labour Education Minister, introducing comprehensive schools in 1965.

"If the minister thinks a universally comprehensive system will provide equal educational opportunities for each child, he is wrong. There will be as many differences between comprehensive schools according to the area they serve or the pupils they attract as there are now" — Margaret Thatcher in Opposition, February 1970.

falling behind." He said comprehensive schools should group children in sets according to their ability.

He also said schools specialising in different subjects should co-operate by taking pupils from their neighbours.

Mr Blunkett, addressing the Social Market Foundation, a free-market think-tank, said: "In spite of 50 years of universal state secondary education and 30 years of comprehensive education, the pattern of excellence at the top, and chronic under-performance at the bottom, persists. Too many commentators associate comprehensives with the worst features of secondary

moderns. And that view is not without justification in too many cases."

He added: "Our commitment to comprehensive education cannot be a commitment to continued mediocrity, to sameness or to tolerance of failure. Ours is a vision of a very different future, offering opportunity to the many rather than to the few. The ideal was 'diversity within one campus'."

The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers said Labour sounded muddled. While Mr Blunkett was not making a U-turn on comprehensive schools, he was "zig-zagging", Nigel de Gruchy,

general secretary, said: "Teachers are very confused. We do not deny the right of any government to make the basic decision of what kind of education system they want. But it won't work. Specialist schools will inevitably end up choosing children."

A spokesman for the National Union of Teachers backed Mr Blunkett's vision. "Comprehensive schools were never about mixed-ability teaching. They were about giving the widest opportunity to the widest number of children. Setting by ability is a way of doing that."

Margaret Tulloch, spokeswoman for the Campaign for State Education, said: "Mr Blunkett seems to be going along with John Major, saying that comprehensive schools are all about drab monolithic mediocrity. The fact is that many do an excellent job. Many others are doing less well because they have never been supported and because they suffer from losing their brightest pupils."

Mrs Tulloch said the specialist teaching Mr Blunkett called for should be available in all comprehensive schools. "A good comprehensive should be able to provide all of this. But it needs properly resourcing, which is something Mr Blunkett says nothing about."

rather than helping schools to improve. Mr Woodhead acknowledged that many teachers had become so anxious about the prospect of inspection that stress consultants advertised services to deal with "post-Ofsted trauma".

But the chief inspector told his London audience that it was "dangerous in the extreme to play to the lowest common denominator of professional anxiety". He added: "I think it is wrong to patronise the many outstanding teachers in the system by pretending that all is well in schools... when we all know that it is not."

Dismissing calls for schools to assess their own performance, Mr Woodhead said: "We must recognise the fact that inspection evidence does not show us many schools that are as yet identifying and

facing up to real weaknesses in a rigorous and honest way, let alone reporting those weaknesses to parents."

Most teachers understood the need for Ofsted to speak out, Mr Woodhead said. "I make no apology for taking the consumer's part when it comes to confronting poor teaching or any other aspect of school provision which does not live up to the standards of the best."

□ The growing numbers of teenagers doing part-time work while still at school are damaging their examination prospects, according to a report published today. Research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that those with jobs were getting poorer results than their counterparts, without apparently improving their career prospects.



This skimpy beaded party dress was a highlight of the opening show of London fashion week yesterday. Designer Maria Grachvogel, from London, is known for glamorous evening wear

Green protesters defeated in bypass court case

By RUSSELL JENKINS

AN ALLIANCE of conservation groups, residents and businessmen yesterday failed to persuade the Court of Appeal to hear their legal challenge to the construction of the Newbury bypass at the same time as the action by tree-top protesters.

The alliance is fronted by the Environmental Law Foundation, a charity. The tree-top protesters were seeking to appeal against their eviction orders from encampments in the path of the proposed bypass.

James Cameron, counsel for the foundation, asked the court to consider whether the Government had breached European law by failing to carry out an in-depth study into the environmental impact of the bypass. He argued that the Transport Secretary had acted unlawfully when he refused to accept the need for an environmental impact assessment as required by a European Union directive.

The court was asked for leave to apply for judicial review of the compulsory purchase orders for the bypass, which counsel claimed had been rendered invalid by the Government's failure to comply with European law.

At the same time, lawyers for a sample group of protesters were using the same points of law to seek leave to appeal against eviction. Mr Cameron argued that it would save time and public money to hear the cases together.

Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Lord Justice Pill and Lord Justice Hutchison, rejected the argument, saying that the two actions were completely separate and that it would be inappropriate to hear them together. "It is open for them to pursue an application for judicial review in the normal way," Lord Justice Rose told a packed court.

A plea from David Watkinson, counsel for the protesters, to have their case postponed until it could be heard at the same time as the conservation groups was turned down.

It was claimed that the possession orders to evict protesters from the route of the bypass, granted in the High Court earlier this month, were invalid because the Transport Department did not legally own the land. The compulsory purchase orders were "unlawful" without an environmental impact assessment.

The three Court of Appeal judges refused the protesters' leave to appeal against eviction. However, Lord Justice Rose threw a lifeline to the campaigners by advising them that at no stage during the legal dispute had anyone attempted a judicial review of the compulsory purchase orders.

Bill aims to curtail powers of secrecy

The House of Lords is debating a Bill that would reduce the powers of the Foreign Office to ratify international treaties secretly. The Bill, according to the Liberal Democrat peer Lord Lester of Herne Hill, would still allow for the avoidance of Parliamentary scrutiny given good reasons.

Lord Lester, who is sponsoring the Treaties (Parliamentary Approval) Bill, said: "No other country in Europe allows this arcane, medieval practice."

Leading article, page 19

Prince's appeal

The Prince of Wales, speaking at an inter-faith university in Morocco, called for a return to a "sense of the sacred" to achieve a more sustainable approach to life. He re-emphasised the importance of greater tolerance and understanding between Islam and the West.

Racism charges

Paul Sargeant, 35, of Hackney, east London, and William Browning, 25, of Harlow, Essex, appeared at the Old Bailey yesterday accused of conspiracy to distribute magazines and CDs intended to stir up racial hatred. They denied the charges.

Eviction call

Tom Sackville, a junior Home Office minister, called for drug dealers who live in council houses or flats to be evicted. Mr Sackville told a crime prevention conference in Leicester that the Government supported efforts by local authorities to clear dealers from estates.

Liner under tow

The Cunard liner *Saga*, stranded in the South China Sea with more than 500 passengers on board after fire broke out in her generators, was under tow to Manila in the Philippines. A tug reached the stricken vessel yesterday.

Council tax low

Westminster council is to set the lowest council tax despite a warning from its chief executive that it could not be sustained without significant spending cuts. After the 7.3 per cent rise, owners of band D properties will pay £295, £300 less than the average.

Milk prices rise

Supermarket chains have increased the price of milk by an average of 11 per cent. A pint of fresh milk rises 2p to 31p and the two-pint size from 57p to 59p. The increase is the first since the deregulation of the milk market in November 1994.

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Ulster

Continued from page 1
think it was an ill-conceived idea that you offer the Government your support for a year when all along you have said you are not entering into deals with the Government at all."

Last night, Mr Trimble met Alastair Goodlad, the Government Chief Whip, in an attempt to patch up the rift. Unionist sources said that Mr Goodlad had accepted that their leaders had not tried to do a deal. But the controversy has raised fresh doubts about whether the Unionists will be prepared to sustain Mr Major in office if he loses his Commons majority before the general election.

Mr Major, however, insisted in the Commons that he would do no deal if the price was "any given action" in respect of policy on Northern Ireland. He agreed with Tony Blair that the issue of Northern Ireland and other matters of intense party controversy were best kept separate.

"There are no deals and there are going to be no deals," he said. "There is no deal with any political party in this House, not with the DUP, not with the Ulster Unionists, not with the SDLP. No deal, now, not yesterday, not tomorrow, not at all on this process."

Great escape, page 8
Simon Jenkins, page 18
Leading article and Letters, page 19

New head sacked long-serving staff

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A NEW headmaster sacked two teachers in a drive to revive the dwindling fortunes of a famous stage school, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Elmhurst Ballet School in Camberley, Surrey, boasted former pupils that included the actresses Jenny Agutter and Hayley Mills and the singer Sarah Brightman.

But when John McNamara took over two years ago he found the teachers opinionated and volatile. Teaching methods and productions were old fashioned and student numbers were falling. Mr McNamara told the

tribunal, in Croydon, south London, that he had been alarmed by the inefficiency at the school where fees are £9,000 a year. Within months, Joseph Schofield, 54, a set designer, of Frimley, Surrey, and Yvonne Morley, 37, a voice teacher, from Hampton, southwest London, who had both taught at the school for many years, had gone in a reorganisation.

Both teachers are suing for unfair dismissal because they claim that posts, detailing jobs identical to their own, were advertised in *The Stage*, the trade newspaper, a fortnight after they left.

Mr McNamara said numbers had dropped from 292 three years ago to 226 today. Mr Schofield had to leave, he said, because he was not a qualified teacher and most of his week was taken up supervising library study periods. "This was an absurdity that would not be tolerated at any other school," Miss Morley's voice training was "something alien to the philosophy and vision" he had for the school.

Mr McNamara admitted that there was no consultation before the sackings. The hearing continues.



Agutter: among stars nurtured by school

هنا من الناحية

Director believes 'spiritual strength and wit' are more relevant than gender

Woman chosen to play God in mystery plays

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN has been chosen to play the part of God in the York Cycle of Mystery Plays, upsetting church traditionalists. Ruth Ford, an amateur actress who runs an antique shop, was picked by the director John Doyle to play God because of her "spiritual strength, wit and presence".

Mrs Ford, 63, granddaughter of the Great Zeno, the music hall star, is thought to be the first woman to play God in the plays, which date from the Middle Ages and are staged every four years. She said: "It never entered my head that I might be asked to play this part. But when John explained to me that it was an instinctive reaction to my audition, I felt I had to give it a go."

Mr Doyle said he had intended to cast a professional actor until he discovered Mrs Ford at auditions one evening. Mrs Ford, who began her theatrical career as Eliza Doolittle in a production of *Pygmalion* in 1970, appeared twice in the mystery plays in the 1970s, as *Plute's Wife* and *Mary Magdalene*.

Mr Doyle, director of the York Theatre Royal for three years, said: "We all have an

impression of what God looks like, but no one knows. I was interested in the personal qualities rather than the sex of the person playing God."

Ruth has humour, joy, strength, qualities I imagine God would have. Sometimes I am sure she would be capable of a bit of wrath as well. I so enjoyed her sense of compassion, and the wonderful twinkle in her eye.

"In the Bible it says that both man and woman are made in God's image, so I didn't feel there was any problem in the fact that Ruth is a woman."

A spokesman for the Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, said: "He is seeking more information. He was aware of this proposal and recognises the artistic freedom of those producing the play to do whatever they want. But some eyebrows will be raised in the Christian community."

The Archbishop of York, the Ven George Austin, said: "It is political correctness gone silly. There is a big movement among feminists to feminise God. It would be better not to depict God at all, but if you are going to depict God, you depict him in Biblical images,

which are images of God as Father."

The York Cycle of Mystery Plays launched the careers of residents including Dame Judi Dench and Ralph Ineson, who co-starred in *Braveheart* with Mel Gibson. City councillors are giving a £50,000 subsidy to the event, which last year drew 100,000 in 1992.

The Theatre Royal, where the plays will be staged in June, stepped in at the last minute in 1992 to rescue the event. It had been held outdoors at St Mary's Abbey since 1951, when it was revived for the Festival of Britain. The plays cover the Bible story from the creation of the world to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

Mr Doyle's decision follows in the mystery play tradition of causing controversy. Originally staged by guilds on sites well away from the churches, they developed apocryphal elements and would often incur the wrath of church leaders for their mockery of priests and nuns and irreverent content. The York cycle attracts an audience from around the world.

Songs of praise, page 10



Ruth Ford at St Mary's Abbey in York, traditional home of the mystery plays

Police say £7m raids could be linked

BY KATE ALDERSON

DETECTIVES believe that the same armed gang could be responsible for three ram-raids attacks that have netted a total of more than £7 million.

A reward of £100,000 has been offered by Security Express after £1.75 million was seized in a raid on its depot in Huyton, Merseyside, on Monday night. A police source described the two-minute attack as "military in style and exceptionally well-organised".

Last July an armed gang hijacked a Securicor van in Salford and made off with £5 million, believed to be the largest single haul from an armed van. In October raiders stole £500,000 from an Armaguard depot in Salford and a month later a gang carried out a failed raid on a Securicor depot in Aintree, Liverpool. The abortive attempt would have netted the gang £8 million.

Detective Chief Inspector Bill Morris of Merseyside Police said officers were investigating a link between the raids and were talking to other forces in the North West.

Detectives are hoping that cameras may have filmed the ram-raiders during Monday night's attack, when a flat-bed lorry was driven through a steel shutter and brick wall to reach a room full of cash. The lorry and a grey Range Rover used as a getaway vehicle had been stolen earlier this month and police are anxious to learn where they were stored.

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Labour MP sues over 'portrayal as drunkard'

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE Labour MP George Howarth sued *The Guardian* yesterday over an article which he said portrayed him as a "boozing, foul-mouthed and uncivilised drunkard".

Mr Howarth, a home affairs spokesman who has represented Knowsley, North since 1986, is claiming damages over a parliamentary sketch by Simon Hoggart on a debate in February 1995 about Sunday pub opening.

In it, Mr Hoggart recounted a story told to him by the writer Fritz Spiegel, who said Mr Howarth had bumped into him in Soho one day in September 1993 and had mouthed expletives at him rather than apologising.

Mr Howarth's counsel, Michael Tugendhat, QC, told the High Court jury that the MP had been the victim of a case of mistaken identity.

Mr Howarth, 46, who has three children, said in evidence that he had never met Mr Spiegel and had been in London only once that month to attend a press conference, accompanied by his researcher.

"I feel very offended. It never happened and to be made out as though I was the sort of person who goes blundering around the street bumping into people shouting abuse at them — it's simply out of character. I would not like to be thought of as someone like that because it's not the sort of person I am."

Guardian Newspapers Ltd denies libel and says the story



Howarth denied he had abused writer

did not bear the meaning alleged by Mr Howarth. But if it did, the newspaper says it is true and cites other incidents involving Mr Howarth which, it says, support the case.

Mr Tugendhat said the newspaper relied on an episode in 1988 when Mr Howarth made a joke in Parliament during a debate about houses being left empty by private landlords. He said that housing policy reminded him of a quote by the actress Zsa Zsa Gabor who, when asked for her comments on the condom, replied that she was inclined to say it all depended on what was in it for her.

Mr Howarth told the jury that no one had complained about the joke. If he had been "out of order" as regards parliamentary rules, he would have been stopped.

The hearing continues today.

Briton in death pact left note to her gun

BY GILES WHITTELL AND RICHARD DUCE

A SUICIDE note left by one of three young Britons who died in an apparent pact was addressed to the gun she used to kill herself.

Jane Greenhow, 23, shot herself through the mouth with a Glock 10mm semi-automatic handgun. Beside her, police found a note addressed to "My Glock". It read: "I'm so sorry I had to leave you now — the only one I'm reluctant to leave behind. I'm so sorry we never got to consummate our relationship. I know we could have had such fun together. Alas, too many regrets."

Also in her rented car, found at Conflict Point Road in Shasta County, California, were tapes by the cult rock band Joy Division, whose singer Ian Curtis killed himself at the age of 23.

The band's music was a shared obsession for Miss Greenhow and her friends Stephen Bateman, 23, and Ruth Fleming, 22, who also shot themselves last Thursday at a shooting range in Arizona 1,000 miles away. All three were wearing black military-style clothing and are thought to have travelled through the United States since January 6 in an effort to forge links with far-right neo-Nazi groups.

Miss Greenhow left about 80 handwritten pages of notes, including: "I hate England. I hate the English. There are very few people worthy of respect. I have tried, torturing myself, trying to be English."

Company compensates men for enforced early retirement

BY ROBIN YOUNG

TWO men forced to take early retirement from a cigarette filter factory after nearly 40 years' service won a victory yesterday on behalf of ageing workers.

Bob Tuck and Derek Todd, of Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, who are both 63, had instituted a claim for unfair dismissal against Filtrona Ltd. Both men were production supervisors. Mr Tuck having worked for the company for 36 years, and Mr Todd for 37.

Mr Tuck said yesterday: "We were given no choice. We were told there was no option but to take early retirement. It was a kick in the teeth, and very depressing when I knew I was every bit as good as the younger workers."

"Derek and I gave a lot of our lives to the factory, working late nights and shifts to help them out. It was no way to be rewarded for nearly 40 years of loyalty and good service."

Mr Todd said: "I was summoned to a meeting with



Bob Tuck and Derek Todd, both 63, after their victory

the managers, and told that the company had a five-year plan and that because of my age I did not fit in with it."

The retirement packages the men had accepted were withdrawn when they started claims of unfair dismissal with backing from the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union, but yesterday, before a hearing at an industrial tribunal in Newcastle upon Tyne, Filtrona settled the case by awarding both men £15,000 compensation

and reinstating their pension rights.

The men's solicitor, Stefan Cross, said: "These two men were treated appallingly. It was a case of take early retirement or we will sack you, because the firm had decided it wanted a younger workforce."

"There is an urgent need for proper age discrimination legislation, but until then awards like this will act as a deterrent."

Filtrona would not comment yesterday.

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Thameslink service upgraded

£650m rail project speeds passengers through London

By JONATHAN PROBYN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

A £650 MILLION rail project that will quadruple direct train services through central London was approved by the Government yesterday, 15 years after it was first proposed.

The Thameslink 2000 St Pancras to London Bridge scheme will allow frequent through services from the English South Coast to stations north of the capital such as Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford by early next century. Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, said it would benefit hundreds of thousands of commuters by connecting 150 stations in the South East.

The route, which passes under the City, was first opened in 1985 but capacity restrictions mean that it suffers from overcrowding and infrequent services. The improvements, which will be carried out by Railtrack, will mean that the minimum number of cross-London trains will be increased from six to 24 an hour in each direction.

There will also be a new low-level station at St Pancras, an extra platform and track at London Bridge, and a new connection to the East Coast Main Line north of King's Cross.

The scheme will also make it far easier for passengers to



fragmenting the railway, we are adding extra capacity and providing an integrated network," he said.

The project is one of a number of large public transport schemes in the southeast commuter belt that have been waiting for Treasury approval, including the complementary east-west Crossrail link, which is likely to be approved shortly. Backing for Thameslink 2000 was secured when Railtrack agreed to fund the bulk of it in return for a £1 billion write-off of debt before its flotation in May. The Government will effectively contribute about £350 million through a £100 million cash contribution and £250 million in written-off debt with Railtrack supplying the remainder from its own resources.

Robert Horton, the chairman of Railtrack, said: "We are delighted."

Clare Short, the Shadow Transport Secretary, welcomed the announcement but said it was regrettable that the project had been delayed because of rail privatisation. It would cost the taxpayer "a massively increased amount of money" as a result.

Tony Banks, the Labour MP for Newham North West, the last chairman of the Greater London Council, told Sir George that the GLC had come up with the Thameslink idea 15 years ago.

Needles offer asthma relief

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

ACUPUNCTURE can help asthma sufferers by easing their breathlessness and reducing the medication they need, research has found. Thirteen of 16 studies into the value of acupuncture as a treatment for asthma have shown it to be effective.

A review of the research, to be presented today at a conference organised by the National

Asthma Campaign, shows that acupuncture also helps by producing a general feeling of wellbeing, which in itself can improve symptoms.

But Kim Jobst, a trained acupuncturist who conducted the review, said drugs were more effective than acupuncture alone. "It is very important to remember that asthma can be a fatal condition which claimed 1,877 lives in the UK in 1992," Dr Jobst said. "It is potentially extremely danger-

ous to abandon standard drug-based treatments, which do control asthma effectively, in favour of a therapy such as acupuncture."

Donald Lane, vice-chairman of the National Asthma Campaign, and consultant chest physician at the Churchill Hospital, Oxford, said there was little doubt that some complementary therapies helped but they had to be used in addition to, not instead of, standard treatments.



Flossy, the Vietnamese pig alleged to deposit its excrement in the garden of Mr and Mrs Bray's bungalow

Neighbours kick up stink in court over pot-bellied pig called Flossy

By TIM JONES

FEUDING neighbours clashed in court yesterday over the powerful aroma exuded by Flossy, a 16-stone Vietnamese pot-bellied pig. Frank and Mary Bray claimed their lives had been made unbearable since Paul Telford introduced Flossy to his home five years ago. The animal was said to produce 8½lb of pungent slurry a day.

Mr Bray, 62, told Newcastle upon Tyne County Court that in summer he and his 61-year-old wife were unable to go into the back garden of their semi-detached bungalow at Tynemouth because of Flossy.

The pig strayed into their garden through a hole in the fence, leaving a trail of droppings that attracted mice, rats and flies to the garden, making it impossible to enjoy.

Ron Mitchell, for Mr and Mrs Bray, said the couple had put up with years of torture



Mr Bray, left, who claims to have put up with years of torture because of Mr Telford and his outside pet

because of their noisy neighbour and his outside pet. He said the case brought by Mr Bray was one of common-law nuisance and the allegations dating back to October 1990 fell into various categories.

"It started with the defendant making a tape of the plaintiff's dog barking. He played it repeatedly and loud-

ly with the sole purpose of annoying them through the wall of their house."

Then the defendant bought a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig and kept it in an outhouse in his garden.

"We say the way this pig is kept is inappropriate in this area and allowing it to roam free and deposit excrement

across the garden amounts to a nuisance."

Philip Walling, for Mr Telford, a 35-year-old computer engineer, referred to a doctor's report which described Mr Bray as having "quite an obsessive personality". Mr Bray replied: "I like things to be more correct than the average person. I wouldn't say I am obsessive."

Mr Walling, who said the barking dog had caused massive irritation to his client, referred to a diary kept by Mr Bray that claimed to chronicle visits to Mr Telford's home by his various friends. He had given each a nickname, such as "blotch", "limpy" and "pretty boy". Mr Walling said: "You refer here to a scruffy black car and list its number plate. That is my car."

Mr Bray replied: "Yes, I know that now and what's more it was in desperate need of a wash."

The case continues.

Arsonists who killed son jailed

A couple who started a fire at their Leeds home which killed their 21-month-old son and seriously injured their six-month-old baby were jailed by Leeds Crown Court.

Michael Cunningham, 27, was sentenced to seven years and Amanda McKenna, 20, to five years after they admitted manslaughter and causing grievous bodily harm. They started the blaze to get compensation to pay off gambling and other debts.

Peer's adultery

The Marchioness of Milford Haven was granted a decree nisi on the grounds of the 4th Marquess's adultery with an unnamed woman. Lord Milford Haven, 34, married Sarah, daughter of the businessman George Walker, in 1989 and they have two children.

Off the rails

A drunken man who rode for five miles on the roof of a train was banned from the Tyneside Metro for a year. The ban was announced after Ben Brookes, 21, of North Shields, was fined £100 by magistrates for wrongful use of a train and being drunk on the Metro.

35 cars in pile-up

Police blamed motorists driving at 90mph into fog for a 35-vehicle crash on the M4 that closed the eastbound carriageway for five hours yesterday morning. Dozens of motorists were injured in the accident between junctions 13 and 14 in Berkshire.

Hanging offence

A driver who put a model of a traffic warden hanging from gallows on the roof of his car is to be prosecuted after a passer-by reported him to police. David Light, 51, of Cheltenham, will appear before the town's magistrates accused of a public order offence.

CORRECTION

An illustration accompanying a report yesterday on accidents to service aircraft wrongly indicated that the pilot of an RAF Hawk had survived, when in fact he had been killed. We apologise to the family and friends of the dead officer.

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Proposals in line with deregulation

Gaming reforms give casino firms 13 more chances

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THIRTEEN towns could soon be sporting casinos after an announcement yesterday to ease the tight restrictions on gambling. The proposals reflect the Government's deregulation policy and follow complaints by the industry that it has been losing custom to the National Lottery.

Ministers have, however, ruled out the development of American-style resort casinos comprising 1,000-bedroom hotels, gaming rooms with dozens of tables and hundreds of slot machines. They have also rejected demands by casino bosses to allow people to walk in off the street to place bets.

A move that is being considered would allow people to bet on what numbers come up in the National Lottery, although the National Heritage Department is opposed to this.

Under the proposals 13 areas, based on population size and proximity to the existing 118 outlets, have been earmarked as potential sites for new casinos. They are Croydon in south London, Dartford and Folkestone in Kent, Gloucester, Hastings in East Sussex, Ipswich in Suffolk, Morecambe in Lancashire, Oxford, Peterborough in Cambridgeshire, Redbridge in Essex, Slough in Berkshire, Swindon in Wiltshire and Weymouth in Dorset.

The 48-hour rule, which prevents anybody playing in a casino until two days after applying for membership, is to be cut to 24 hours. The 24-

hour rule that applies to membership of bingo clubs is to be abolished.

Strict licensing curbs that forbid the serving of alcohol after midnight are to be ended. Casinos will be allowed to sell beers, wines and spirits until 3am in London and 2am in the regions. The ban on advertising by casinos is to be lifted, allowing operators to provide information in telephone directories, listings magazines, hotel brochures and holiday guides. They will not be allowed to promote their business on the broadcast media.

Payment by debit card, but not credit card, will be allowed and casino operators will still have to convince local licensing authorities that there is a public demand for their facilities.

Timothy Kirkhope, a junior

Home Office Minister, said: "This is a balanced package of reform which will update legal controls which go back more than 25 years whilst maintaining effective regulation. Controls are necessary to prevent the incursion of crime, public disorder and nuisance into gambling and to ensure that it is at all times properly and honestly conducted." Moves to introduce the reforms will begin after a three-month consultation period.

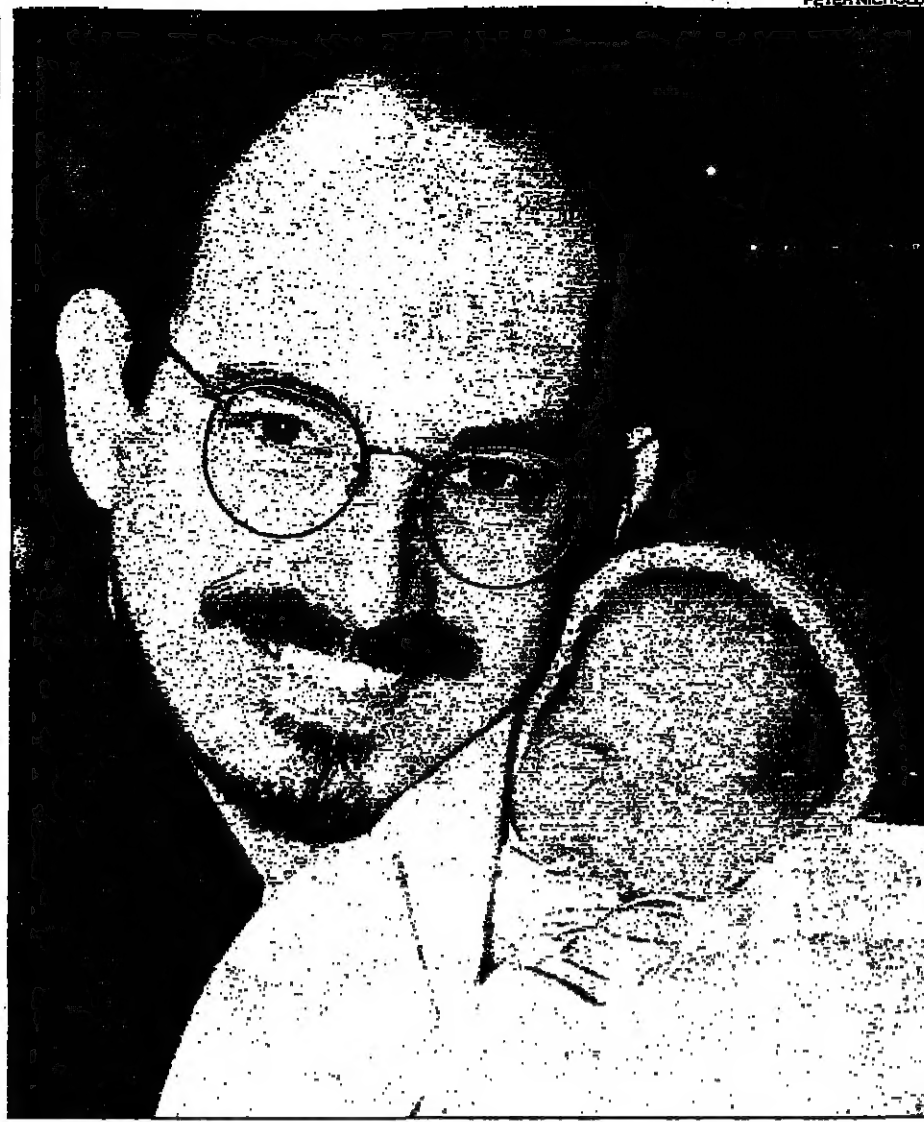
The National Council of Gamblers criticised the plans last night and said they would encourage people to spend more money than they have been doing. "There's been much dancing in the streets by the gambling interest at the prospect of deregulation. I'm not aware of any dancing in the streets by the punters," Dr Emanuel Moran, chairman of the council, said.

A spokesman for Gamblers Anonymous condemned the proposals and said they would lead to more misery and debt among families. "The Government is opening the floodgates to more and more gambling in this country."

Sources in the industry expressed disappointment last night at the limited nature of the proposals. One said: "It is just tinkering at the edges. The idea of Las Vegas in London is completely wrong. There is no way big US firms which cater for a huge mass market are going to be attracted to London as a result of these proposals."



Kirkhope commended a "balanced package"



Timothy Wilkinson, an ambulanceman, with the baby named after him

Interpol hunts airport mother

By ANDREW PIERCE

DETECTIVES leading a worldwide search for a mother who abandoned her newborn baby in a bin at Heathrow believe she boarded an international flight less than an hour after giving birth.

Interpol has been called in to the search for the mother of the 7lb white boy who was discovered in a nappy bin, with the lid closed, in a

lavatory at Terminal 4. Police believe that the mother boarded an aircraft within minutes because the baby was found in the "air side" area of the terminal, beyond immigration and customs controls.

There is a slim possibility she might have been on an incoming journey. Scotland Yard has also not ruled out the mother being a member of the airport staff.

The baby was making good progress yesterday at

Ashford Hospital, west London. He has been named Timothy Ian after the two ambulance men who brought him in on Monday. A woman passenger had heard the baby's faint cries and alerted the airport authorities.

The search for the mother is focused on 18 flights that took off from Terminal 4 shortly before 3pm on Monday. A hospital spokesman said that the woman might need urgent medical attention.

Fishermen vote to stop work during clean-up

By CAROL MIDGLEY

WELSH fishermen voted to keep their boats in harbour yesterday, rather than raise public fears about the safety of catches after the Sea Empress oil disaster.

Fishermen and fish merchants affected by the giant slick off west Wales said the voluntary ban was designed to shore up public confidence as the clean-up continued.

At a meeting of 3,000 fishing representatives in Milford Haven, many spoke of the financial hardship they faced from keeping boats idle. The local fish industry is worth £7 million a year and employs about 1,000 people.

Spanish and Korean buyers have cancelled all orders until the oil has been cleared. Some crews claim they are losing up to £1,000 a day by calling off whelk fishing in Caernarvon Bay.

For many fishermen around Milford Haven their only current source of income is from television crews hiring their boats to film the slick. All have now pledged to fight for compensation from the International Oil Producers' compensation fund. Claims are expected to reach £20 million.

Yesterday as the Welsh Office decided whether to announce an official fishing exclusion zone, the South Wales Fisheries Committee said a voluntary ban was essential to maintain public confidence.

A spokesman said: "The general mood is one of great despair here... The long-term effects really depend on where the oil lands. If it lands right on top of the cockles and mussels, for example, they will be killed outright - if they cannot get out of the way, if it

remains in deep water and breaks up, then we might be okay."

David Bray, a trawler skipper and local secretary of the Welsh Coastal Inshore Fishermen's Association, said: "It is vital that compensation payments are arranged as quickly as possible because many fishermen have overdrafts and loans on boats and equipment."

An insurance company representative has arrived in Milford Haven to begin processing claims. However, it is feared that there may be long waits for payouts.

The lobster and crab industry, which is concentrated around the polluted Pembrokeshire coastline is worth £1.5 million a year, the cockle, mussel and whelk industry more than £2 million.

Chris Davies, who runs the Walter Davies and Sons Fish Merchants in Milford Haven, said that while deep-sea fishing was continuing, fishing closer to shore has been disastrously affected. "Orders are being cancelled particularly from Korea and Spain. Other buyers are saying that they will have a look at our catches but if they are polluted they won't buy."

So far 1,648 oil-soaked birds have been taken to sanctuaries. Of those, 1,081 are scoters and 399 are guillemots. Up to 120 birds rescued from Lundy off the north Devon coast are being flown from Exeter airport to RSPCA wildlife hospitals in Guernsey and Jersey.

Jersey European Airways has offered to take 20 to 30 boxes of birds twice a day to the islands. The oil is now moving north.

Letters, page 19

Labour MP buys New Statesman

By A STAFF REPORTER

A MILLIONAIRE Labour MP has paid £125,000 to rescue *New Statesman & Society* from administration.

In a statement yesterday, Geoffrey Robinson said he had formally signed papers to acquire the left-wing weekly magazine on Monday night from Grant Thornton, the administrators. "Today represents a new start for this historic radical magazine. I am honoured and privileged to be part of a project that will see a revival in the *New Statesman's* sales and influence," the member for Coventry North West said.

He promised to invest in the magazine and to ensure that a

new editor, whose name he would announce shortly, would have full editorial independence. "I will ensure that the necessary funds are available for the new editor of the *New Statesman* to relaunch the magazine in the spring with the best writers available and using modern sales and distribution techniques."

The magazine was put into administration last month after its main shareholder, Philip Jeffrey, withdrew his support. Sales have fallen from 96,000 at their peak in 1966 to about 20,000. The magazine was founded in 1913 by George Bernard Shaw and Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

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Profit on Ordinary Activities	18,779	18,431
Tax on Profit on Ordinary Activities	6,350	6,164
Profit for the Year	12,529	12,267
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Ulster Unionists deny seeking a secret deal and accuse Government of petty revenge

How Major pulled off his great Scott escape

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND PHILIP WEBSTER

BAGHDAD was meant to be the backdrop to Monday night's vote on the Scott report. But as the drama unfolded in the Commons and in the darker recesses of Westminster and Whitehall, it was Belfast that commanded the attention of John Major and his ministerial colleagues.

The Prime Minister went into the debate on arms to Iraq fearing that an opportunistic alliance of disgruntled Unionists and maverick Tories would cost him victory and force the resignations of William Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas Lyell — prompting yet another confidence vote.

His twin targets were the handful of Tory MPs tempted by allure of a high-profile rebellion and the nine Ulster Unionists led by David Trimble. If the Unionists could be persuaded to abstain, Mr Major would be home and dry, irrespective of how the Tory rebels voted.

But the Ulster Unionists were in no mood to help. Mr Trimble had been appalled by the findings of the Scott report. Perhaps he and his colleagues — ever alert to yet another British sell-out — smelled a rat in the prospect of their headline Democratic Unionist Party rivals, led by Ian Paisley, abstaining. They suspected that Mr Major had promised to back the DUP formula for the proposed elections in Northern Ireland — a cross-province poll based on a party list system that tends to favour populist figures such as Mr Paisley.

But senior politicians were not the only players in the

drama. Some 300 yards away in the Cabinet Office, senior civil servants from London and Dublin were putting the finishing touches to a new agreement on the future of Northern Ireland that will form the basis of today's Anglo-Irish summit in London.

The delicate operation to rescue the peace process in the face of the collapse of the IRA ceasefire had reached a critical point. After a frantic round of talks in recent days involving London, Dublin, the political leaders and Washington, they had before them a plan that might reconcile the competing concerns of the rival parties. A complicated formula involving the so-called proximity talks, renamed "intensive discussions", elections, a possible referendum, and eventually a date for all-party talks was close to being agreed.

But the appeasement would have been upset if Mr Major had given way to the Unionists and plumped for their favoured form of elections, a constituency-based affair with 18 seats each electing five members to a 90-seat forum. The agreement leaves open the form of elections, merely pointing out that the "party list" form favoured by the Rev Ian Paisley and John Hume, leader of the nationalist SDLP, would take longer to achieve and leave the date for all-party talks further away.

The first twist in the drama came at 6pm on Monday night when the Rev Martin Smyth, the Ulster Unionist Chief Whip, hurried into the Government whips' office to

see Alastair Goodlad, the Government Chief Whip. As Mr Smyth admitted on BBC radio yesterday, he was there to talk about arms in Ulster, not arms to Iraq. "I went because there were things within the proposals coming through to us that I wanted some clarification on."

Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland Minister for Political Development, was soon called in as Mr Smyth voiced his party's concern that Mr Major had done a secret deal with Mr Paisley. It is at this point that accounts of the backstage machinations diverge.

Mr Smyth said that he asked whether the Government was "in hock" to the DUP. But he flatly denied that he promised that his troops would keep Mr Major in power for another 12 months if he backed their rival plan for elections based on parliamentary constituencies.

But it was this explosive allegation of "blackmail and gerrymandering" that ministers were to make later as they tumbled out of the chamber to face the press after Mr Major's one-vote escape.

Shortly afterwards, Mr Major had a brief encounter with Mr Trimble, who reported to his colleagues before they adjourned for dinner. At 8.30pm, the nine Unionist MPs met again in the Commons and decided to vote *en bloc* against the Government.

One reassurance had already been offered — by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, in writing to Ken Maginnis, the Unionist

security spokesman, and by Mr Ancram at the first meeting. The Government was neutral about the form of elections and would leave it to the parties to decide later. But this was not enough to change the course of events.

By 9.15pm, Mr Major was staring defeat in the face. After an invitation from Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, Mr Trimble and Mr Smyth returned to Mr Major's Commons study. Flanked by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Mr Mawhinney, and Mr Goodlad, the Prime Minister sought to reinforce the assurances given earlier. But he insisted that he would do no special deals with anyone.

As Mr Heseltine put it yesterday: "The point that he made to Mr Trimble very clearly was that no deals had been done with Dr Paisley and no deals could be done with the Ulster Unionists."

Mr Trimble supported Mr Heseltine's version of this meeting. But yesterday he was livid about the blackguarding of his party. He accused ministers of reading "far too much into a chance remark at a private meeting" — a reference to the Smyth/Goodlad encounter at 6pm.

"I am amazed to see the Government coming out and spreading these highly coloured and misleading accounts of conversations that have taken place."

He added: "Last night, it was quite obvious that some Government ministers were disappointed in the way that we voted and then came out



and put a prejudicial spin on things to try get back at us. It is a petty form of revenge by small-minded people."

The fairest conclusion is that both sides had some justification for their claims. Mr Major did make a modest attempt to buy off the Unionists by reassuring them of his neutrality on electoral systems. Mr Smyth apparently set his price higher.

Even if Mr Major had wanted to pledge the Unionists all he could not have

afforded to. It would have made it virtually impossible for yesterday's meetings with Mr Hume and Mr Paisley to have ended in anything other than deadlock. The summit might have been lost.

When the last meeting with the Unionists ended at 9.30pm, the government machine prepared for the possibility of defeat. With the nine Unionists in the wrong lobby the Government could not afford even three rebels. By then there were still three, perhaps four. Vigorous efforts were still going on in the chamber and outside to "turn" them.

Richard Shepherd and Quentin Davies were beyond recall. But Rupert Allason, who made a sharply critical speech in the House earlier in the evening, was always felt by the whips to be moveable. He has been in trouble before, losing the whip for going missing for the Maastricht confidence vote. Whether his local party was exerting pressure behind the scenes is unclear. But he was apparently looking for a way out.

Roger Freeman, the Public Service Minister, gave him a mini-concession on "gagging orders". It was enough, and within minutes Mr Allason was being hailed as a saviour by his colleagues. More difficult to convince was John Marshall, MP for Hendon South, who was always a possible abstainer. He, too, was brought back into the fold at a late stage after a chat with the Prime Minister.

As the voting started Mr Major knew that he might win by one if everybody turned up, and if there was no assassin waiting to ambush him. So the propaganda machine readied itself. Even as the vote took place, ministers and spin-doctors were saying that Mr Major would not gamble with Ulster's destiny. If the Government had lost, the intention was clearly to portray Mr Major as the leader who went down to a defeat on the Scott report in order to protect the peace process.

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Lib-Lab strategy seen as a success

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Scott report produced one unexpected and immediate effect — a joint strategy by Labour and the Liberal Democrats to defeat the Government.

It was the first time since the Labour Government led by Lord Callaghan of Cardiff (then Mr Callaghan) was facing defeat in 1978 that senior frontbenchers from the two parties had joined forces so publicly on such a high-profile issue. The alliance of Robin Cook, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, and Menzies Campbell, his Liberal Democrat counterpart, may have failed by a single vote to force a motion of no confidence in the Government.

But, while senior figures strenuously downplayed suggestions of a revival of the "Lib-Lab pact", both party leaderships were jubilant over the success of the ploy and acknowledged that it could help pave the way for further joint campaigns.

The strategy followed private discussions between Mr Cook and Robert Maclean, the Liberal Democrat President, over proportional representation. It also coincided with a clear signal from Peter Mandelson, a close adviser to Tony Blair, that Labour is prepared to work with the Liberal Democrats on electoral reform.

The teaming up of two of the opposition benches' most formidable operators occurred largely by chance. Only as Mr Cook and Mr Campbell found themselves stalling each other around radio and television studios two weeks ago did they decide to join forces. The alliance was strengthened by a separate pairing of Donald Dewar, Labour's Chief Whip, and Archie Kirkwood, the Liberal Democrat whip, who held a joint press conference to berate ministers for trying to block a Commons vote on Scott. That all four men are Scottish helped: they knew each other well from the Scottish political circuit.

Balance of talks depends on the electoral system

Whatever electoral system emerges for the Northern Ireland peace forum will depend not on absolute issues of principles but on relative questions of party advantage. One favours larger parties, another smaller ones. The same choices apply to any post-election talks on electoral reform between Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

We have become so attached in Britain to first past the post that we often forget that other systems have often been considered and are in current use in Northern Ireland. As Vernon Bogdanor noted in his 1984 book, *What is Proportional Representation?*, a Royal Commission in 1910 said there were over 300 different systems. In 1917, a Speakers' Conference unanimously recommended that Britain should adopt a single transferable vote in urban seats and the alternative vote in rural constituencies. But this was rejected because Lloyd George was opposed, a position which his Liberal successors have ever since regretted. Labour was then in favour of electoral reform, a policy which was dropped when it replaced the Liberals.

First past the post has been in the interests of the two dominant parties, while strong government has been preferred to a close arithmetic balance between votes cast and seats. The losers have been minority parties, but even when there has been an enormous imbalance, as in 1983, there has been little public outcry. Electoral reform has gained fresh support in Labour after its four successive defeats, even though Tony Blair is still a sceptic.

Any big party favouring reform has to recognise that many of its existing MPs may lose out, especially since Tory and Labour MPs are now more regionally concentrated. There would be fewer Labour MPs from the North East or Glasgow. Labour supporters of change have therefore defended the single-member constituencies and suggested that MPs should be elected by the alternative vote. Electors would express a first, second and third preference and the

with the least votes and the surpluses of those above the quota, and therefore elected, are then redistributed. This process continues until five members reach the quota. This assists medium-sized parties which would be squeezed out under first past the post, though small parties still would not gain seats. This system, favoured by the Ulster Unionists, would broadly endorse the current balance of parties and would exclude small fringe groups.

By contrast, the Democratic Unionists and the SDLP favour a system in which people would vote for party lists rather than individual candidates in constituencies. Depending on the minimum share of voters required for representation, this would allow smaller parties such as the paramilitaries to be elected. It might also help parties with well-known candidates at the top of their list. The choice of electoral systems is therefore crucial to the balance in the forum and the all-party talks.

PETER RIDDELL



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New deal allows constituency sponsorship

Labour to sever cash link between unions and MPs

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR'S link with the trade unions will be weakened further today when the party ends direct union sponsorship of individual MPs.

Labour's ruling national executive is expected to back a compromise where unions can sponsor constituencies but not MPs. Any constituency, whether it has a sitting Labour MP or not, would be able to apply for funding from a trade union.

The scheme, which has drawn up partly as a result of the Nolan committee's report on standards in public life. After this was published last summer, Tony Blair made clear that Labour had to be seen "as squeaky clean". He is also anxious to avoid Tory taunts that Labour MPs are in the pocket of the trade unions.

Under the present "flashing agreement" unions sponsor about 150 MPs at a cost of about £1,000 a year. In addition they pay up to 80 per cent of general election expenses, which works out at about £6,000 per MP.

The money technically already goes to constituencies, although it is done in the name of the member of parliament, allowing the Tories to exploit the system.

The Labour leadership had hoped that unions would agree to money being pooled so that it could be used to bolster the party in marginal constituencies in the run-up to the general election. But under the compromise deal, which

has been thrashed out by a working party of trade unionists and MPs, unions will be able to choose which constituencies they support.

Trade union sources gave the impression that they might pull funding from up to a third of the MPs whom they back, and emphasised that they were unlikely to support marginal constituencies where they could not guarantee that an MP would be returned to Parliament.

However, the GMB general workers' union and the Transport and General Workers' Union are expected to honour their commitment to a £200,000 fund for election expenses for 55 key marginal constituencies.

The party's rules will be changed before Nolan's recommendations are implemented on March 31. But there is a tacit understanding that unions will not withdraw any funding from constituencies where they are already sponsoring the MP, before the next general election.

Under the Nolan guidelines, MPs would have to declare any direct funding from trade unions, but they will not have to declare money paid to their constituencies. If the constituencies or unions decide to pay them additional money for research staff, this will also have to be declared.

Trade union sources insisted last night that the new sponsorship rules had first been proposed by the unions themselves. They denied that

it presented any weakening of their link with the party, pointing out that the new scheme would help to build relations between the unions and the constituency.

Unions that have threatened to withdraw funding from some MPs after the general election claim that the extra money will fund Euro MPs or local councils.

The party's decision over trade union sponsorship follows months of consultation with the unions. Last summer the Transport and General Workers' Union threatened to block the deal and leaving MPs demanded a meeting with Mr Blair to insist that the current sponsorship scheme was maintained.

The National Executive Committee is also expected to decide today the future of John Lloyd, the parliamentary candidate for Exeter, who has admitted taking part in bombings in South Africa.

Mr Lloyd, 54, a barrister, was a member of the African Resistance Movement, a small group of intellectuals opposed to apartheid which was responsible for bombings against targets such as electricity pylons and radio masts in the 1960s.

Labour's ruling body will decide today whether to endorse Mr Lloyd or to reject him as a candidate. Party sources have argued that Mr Lloyd's past was well known at national and local levels in 1992 when he was first selected to stand at Exeter.



Tony Blair, who said last night that greater environmental protection would create jobs

Blair looks to green future

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

TONY BLAIR last night outlined a vision of Britain in which economic growth would be combined with protection of the environment.

In his first speech devoted to the subject, Mr Blair pledged to put green issues at the heart of decision-making by a Labour government. The Labour leader also announced a plan to take young people off the dole by setting up a "green task force" to

tackle urban decay and help insulate homes.

Mr Blair, who had been suspected by conservation groups of lacking commitment to the environment, also pledged that a Labour government would press for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to protect wildlife.

In his speech in central London, Mr Blair put environmental concerns in the context of his "stakeholder society". The speech marks a shift from traditional Labour thinking on the subject, which has tended to portray the

environment as a secondary concern, costing jobs through controls on industry.

Mr Blair said last night that evidence from abroad showed that tough environmental controls actually increased a nation's competitiveness and stimulated employment.

He said Labour would set up a parliamentary committee to assess the impact of government policies on the environment. It would undertake an energy efficiency scheme for homes and pursue an integrated transport strategy to encourage bus and rail use.

Tory condemned over claim of ferry alcoholism

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

A TORY MP who claimed that the *Herald of Free Enterprise* sank because the crew were drunk and led by left-wing trade unionists was fiercely criticised in the Commons yesterday.

Two weeks before the ninth anniversary of the disaster, more than 100 Opposition MPs demanded that David Shaw, the MP for Dover, apologise to the relatives of those who died.

During a short Commons debate on ferry safety last week, Mr Shaw told MPs that "alcoholism was rife" among the crew of the ferry, which turned over outside Zeebrugge harbour in March 1987 after its bow doors were left open, killing 193 people.

"Alcoholism caused the *Herald of Free Enterprise* to go down," he said. "People did not do their jobs because they were drunk." Discipline was poor, he added. "In reality, the officers were not in control, extreme left-wing trade unionists were in control of the ship."

Paul Flynn, the Labour MP for Newport West who sponsored the debate, yesterday wrote to John Major, asking him to dissociate himself from Mr Shaw's "unfounded and highly insensitive remarks".

Mr Flynn will raise the issue tomorrow during Prime Minister's Questions. In a Commons motion, 103 Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs deplored Mr Shaw's comments which, they said, contradicted both the Sherrin report on the tragedy and later ministerial statements in the House. "We hope he will make a full and unreserved apology to the bereaved relatives of the victims and to those who survived the disaster," they said. "We deplore [his] apall-



Shaw: standing by his allegations

ing and inaccurate attempts to rewrite history and look forward to his imminent replacement... by an honourable gentleman prepared to pay proper respect to those who died."

Surviving crewmen have denounced the claims as a "shur which cannot go unchallenged".

Last night Mr Shaw stood by his remarks, pointing out that P&O ferries issued an immediate alcohol ban on their crews after the disaster. All he was doing was defending the safety of Dover's ferries against serious attack from Labour, he said.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to environment ministers and the Prime Minister; statement on Thomas rail link; Criminal Procedure and Investigations Bill, second reading; backbench debate on cold weather payments in England and Wales; in the Lords: Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill, third reading; Reserve Forces Bill, report; several Social Security orders and regulations.

TODAY in the Commons: backbench debates: Scottish questions; debates on various housing support grants for Scotland; backbench debate on East Sussex road improvements. In the Lords: concern of health staff about developments in the NHS; Timeline (Post-natal Approval) Bill, second reading; Llanelli (City of Llanelli and District of Llanelli) (Structural Change) Order.

Officer-only courts martial a case of 'social snobbery'

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Ministry of Defence was accused of social snobbery yesterday for insisting on only officers serving on court martial panels. Would it not be fairer, MPs asked, to allow witnesses during a Commons select committee hearing, for senior non-commissioned officers, such as regimental sergeant-majors, to sit in judgment on their peers?

The question was posed during a meeting of the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill, which, among other issues, is examining whether the court martial system should be reformed.

John Reid, MP for Motherwell North and a Labour

defence spokesman, said the court martial system was all about the "officer class" sitting in judgment.

Robert Key, Conservative MP for Salisbury, said the view of Army privates he had spoken to was that courts martial were "fired from the rear" and it was just a question of "wheeling in the guilty".

The allegations were strongly denied by a team of 13 witnesses from the ministry who said that although some changes were being introduced, the court martial system was fair.

Brigadier Peter Currie, director of personnel services

(Army), said he preferred to use the term "officer-corps" to officer class, but he insisted that only officers were appropriate for sitting on courts martial because the whole system was based on the chain of command.

Asked if regimental sergeant-majors would not do the job just as well as officers, the brigadier agreed he could not think of any RSJs in his experience who could not perform the duty properly.

Dr Reid suggested that senior NCOs "know all the tricks" and might give tougher sentences than officers. Was not the whole system based on "social snobbery, not justice?"

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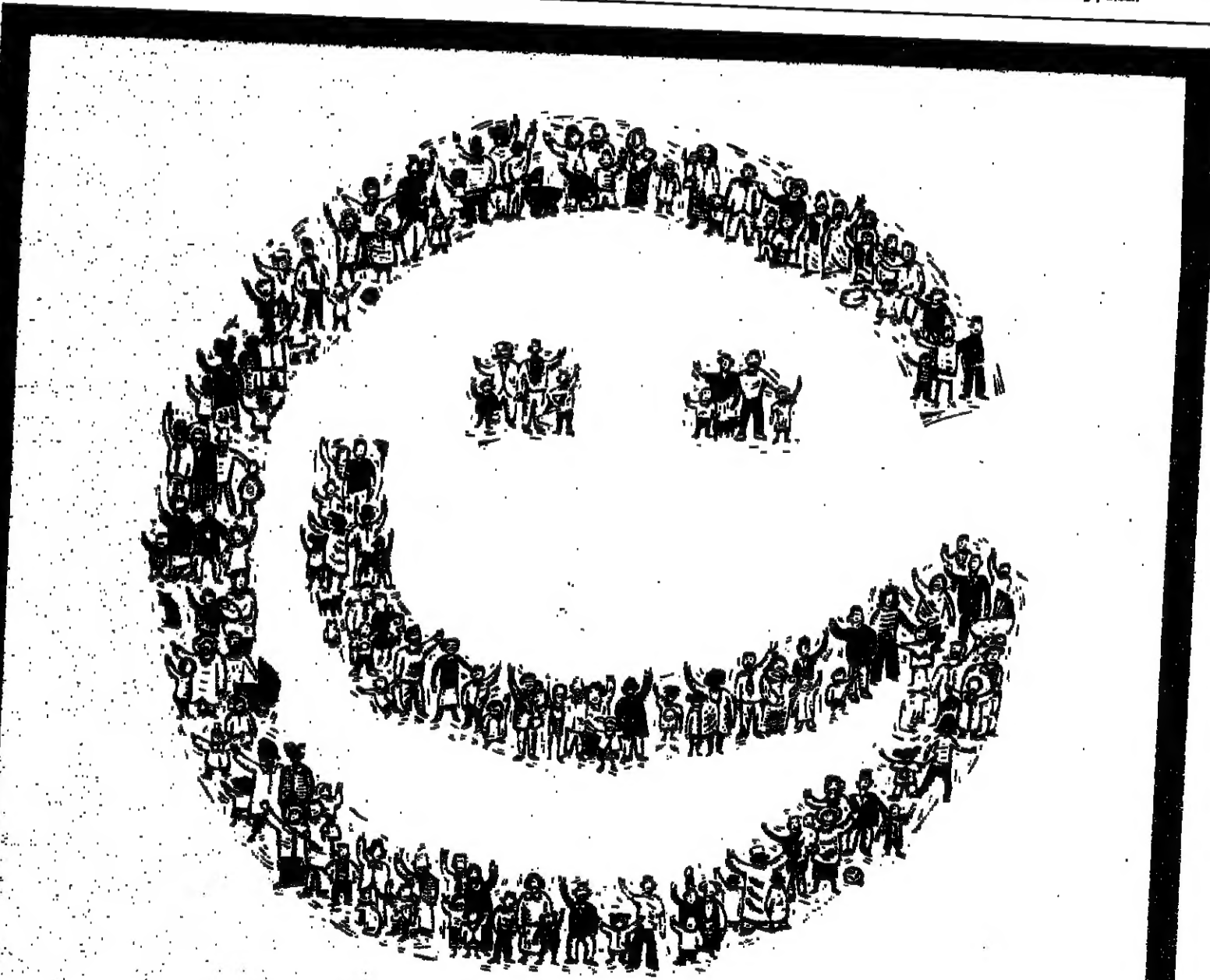
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Shining talent tops hymn charts with new songs of praise

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A MODERN-DAY Charles Wesley has written six of the "Top 25" hymns and worship songs, including the number one, *Shine Jesus Shine*.

Graham Kendrick, 45, from Croydon, has written more than 300 songs, which sell all over the world. Many churchgoers believe his songs will one day become classics, as did the hymns of Wesley and Isaac Watts in the 18th-century evangelical revival.

Mr Kendrick donates much of his royalties to his church, south-east London's Ichthus fellowship, and to evangelical events such as March for Jesus.

His wife Jill, who with him owns their company Make Way Music, said: "It is a calling. Graham writes excellent songs with lots of content and lots of integrity. I think he is exceptional and God has really used him."

The survey, by Christian Copyright Licensing, a limited company, shows increasing use of modern hymns and

worship songs, with their catchy tunes and choruses. Traditional poetic hymns, such as those by the Right Rev Timothy Dudley-Smith, the retired Bishop of Thetford, remain popular and are in the top 500. But none of that style makes it into the top 25.

However, because the survey monitors only those songs still in copyright, the Top 25 does not take into account the thousands of churches that stick to *Hymns Ancient & Modern* and the *New English Hymnal*. But other hymn surveys in recent years have also shown a surge in the popularity of worship songs.

The biggest climber in the chart is the evangelical song *Blessed Be the Name of the Lord*, which is accompanied by arm actions and sometimes by dancing in the aisles. Clinton Uterbach's song has entered at number eight.

But besides having the number one, Mr Kendrick dominates the charts with *The*

Servant King at number six, *Such Love* at number 12, *Meekness and Majesty* at number 19, *Rejoice, Rejoice Christ Is In You* at number 21, and *Jesus Put This Song Into Our Hearts* at number 23.

The results elicited a warning from Canon Michael Seward, a leading hymn-writer, director of Jubilate Hymns and treasurer of St Paul's Cathedral. Canon Seward, who is himself an evangelical, said: "Such songs and choruses are hugely popular and some are excellent vehicles for simple worship."

"But there is a flip-side and it is the price that will ultimately be paid by churches that have failed to recognise the historic teaching value of hymns, including many from the past 30 years, which give shape and content to the Christian faith. People learn their theology from hymns and a new generation is growing up with little or no theology in its bloodstream."



Graham Kendrick, who has written more than 300 songs of worship in what his wife says is a calling

The incurable patients who are perfectly well

THE IRA bomb in Docklands coincided with a request for a report on a patient who had been buried in a terrorist bomb attack more than 15 years ago. Since this terrifying incident the patient has had the characteristic symptoms of heart disease, although a series of expensive, elaborate and even invasive tests has failed to demonstrate anything wrong with his coronary arteries or any other system that could mimic disease in them.

My patient will be classified as suffering from a somatoform disorder, a trendy medical term that would not have been understood by my grandfather, or even father, although they would have recognised its symptoms and the type of patients who suffer from it.

Somatoform disorders include the hysteria neuroses, now often referred to as conversion disorders, malingering, hypochondria, dysmorphia, also known as dysmorphobia, in which a patient takes an obsessive dislike to some rare or imagined flaw in part of their body, and somatisation disorder, the condition in which the patient has recurring or multiple



MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

medical problems which have been present for years and for which there is no demonstrable cause.

When malingering, which is comparatively rare, a patient deliberately assumes various symptoms with the intention of escaping duty. Hysteria neurosis is quite different. In these cases there is no conscious intention to deceive; the mechanism is entirely subconscious. But there is some loss of physical function which mimics disease or injury and results in benefit to the patient, for example soldiers who develop a paralysis before battle.

Hysterical neuroses are becoming much less common than they used to be. Hypochondriacs, on the other hand, have always been with us and their treatment is a regular part of medical practice. They are convinced that they have some particular disease, usu-

ally serious, or a variety of diseases. Because they are highly sensitive to physical sensations, they are too well aware of symptoms most people ignore and subconsciously exaggerate them, convincing themselves of the correctness of their own fearful diagnosis. Every sore throat is seen as possible diphtheria, every headache as meningitis and every cough as likely TB.

It is, however, people with somatisation disorders who are the real heart-sink patients in any surgery queue. They are also the bane of those who work in personnel departments. Like my patient exhibiting signs of heart disease, they have symptoms for years and come and go from work as the severity of their troubles varies. Meanwhile, their medical tests usually continue to be absolutely normal.

How we outwit the malaprop trap

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

WORDS were the topic of the fourth Reith Lecture last night. Professor Jean Aitchison continued to spin her "language web" — the theme of this year's lectures — by nominating the human lexicon or "wordstore", with its multitude of links, as "perhaps the most truly web-like of all aspects of language".

"Word learning ability is clearly inbuilt," she said. According to her "best guess", an educated native speaker of English knows at least 50,000 words — some 20,000 more than Shakespeare used in his plays.

Professor Aitchison, who holds the Rupert Murdoch chair of Language and Communication at Oxford University, told listeners that most English-speaking children can use about 500 words by the age of five, a total that rises to 20,000 by 13. "A typical university student can use the equivalent of two-thirds of the Concise Oxford Dictionary, which claims to contain around 75,000 entries," she said.

But how do we cope with such a multitude of words? How can we tell which is the right one when we need to use a word at work or in conversa-

tion? The answer, says Professor Aitchison, lies in the word web in our minds, "whose multiple links enable humans to remember and find so many words so quickly".

Sometimes, however, meaning and sound get detached — as with Sheridan's *Mrs Malaprop* — and the meaning gets linked to the wrong sounds. That is why the playwright's character, from *The Rivals*, says lines such as "as angry as an allegory on the banks of the Nile".

Professor Aitchison's thesis last night was that "each word is an intersection point at which numerous strands meet": these strands include synonyms, antonyms, words that sound alike and a powerful sense of which words should go with which.

"People who grow up speaking British English don't talk about rank butter or rancid eggs or rotten weeds. They reliably refer to rancid butter, rotten eggs and rank weeds, even though rancid, rank and rotten tend to have overlapping definitions in dictionaries," she said.

□ Professor Aitchison's final lecture is on Tuesday, March 5, at 8.30pm on BBC Radio 4.

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Arafat arrests 140 suspects as Israel braces for attacks

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE future of the peace process hung in the balance yesterday as Israel's army Chief of Staff said that more Islamic suicide bombs were expected and police investigations disclosed that a supposed car accident on Monday in which one Israeli was killed and 23 injured was an Arab terror attack.

In an attempt to ward off increasing pressure for a resumption of Israeli army activity inside the newly autonomous Palestinian areas, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian police announced that 140 suspected members of Hamas, the largest militant Islamic group, and Islamic Jihad had been arrested. Hamas issued a furious demand for the release of its men, reawakening the prospect of a Palestinian civil war in Gaza.

Lieutenant-General Amnon Shahak delivered his grim assessment to a Knesset all-party committee meeting at which the mood was described by one official as extremely severe. At the same time, Moshe Shahal, the Security Minister, confirmed what many Israelis had suspected: that despite earlier police denials, the supposed accident in which an Arab-American drove into a crowded Israeli bus and hunch-hiking stop in Jerusalem, had been an attempt at mass murder.

The driver, Ahmed Abdul

Hamideh, 37, was a new convert to extreme Islam who had told West Bank friends before his hired car ploughed into the crowd: "Tonight you will see me on television." He was shot dead as he tried to run away from the car which investigations yesterday showed had no mechanical faults. The car also contained extreme Islamic literature.

The announcement that the crash had been a Palestinian attack further exacerbated tension on the streets which has reached a level not seen for many years. It was made public just as the victim, Flora Yehiel, 28, a Jewish settler who had gone to Jerusalem to receive a rabbi's blessing for her imminent cancer treatment, was being buried. "We have to do something about these bastards. I do not know what, but we have to be able to go about our ordinary lives without facing death every day," a Jerusalem shopkeeper said when he heard the news.

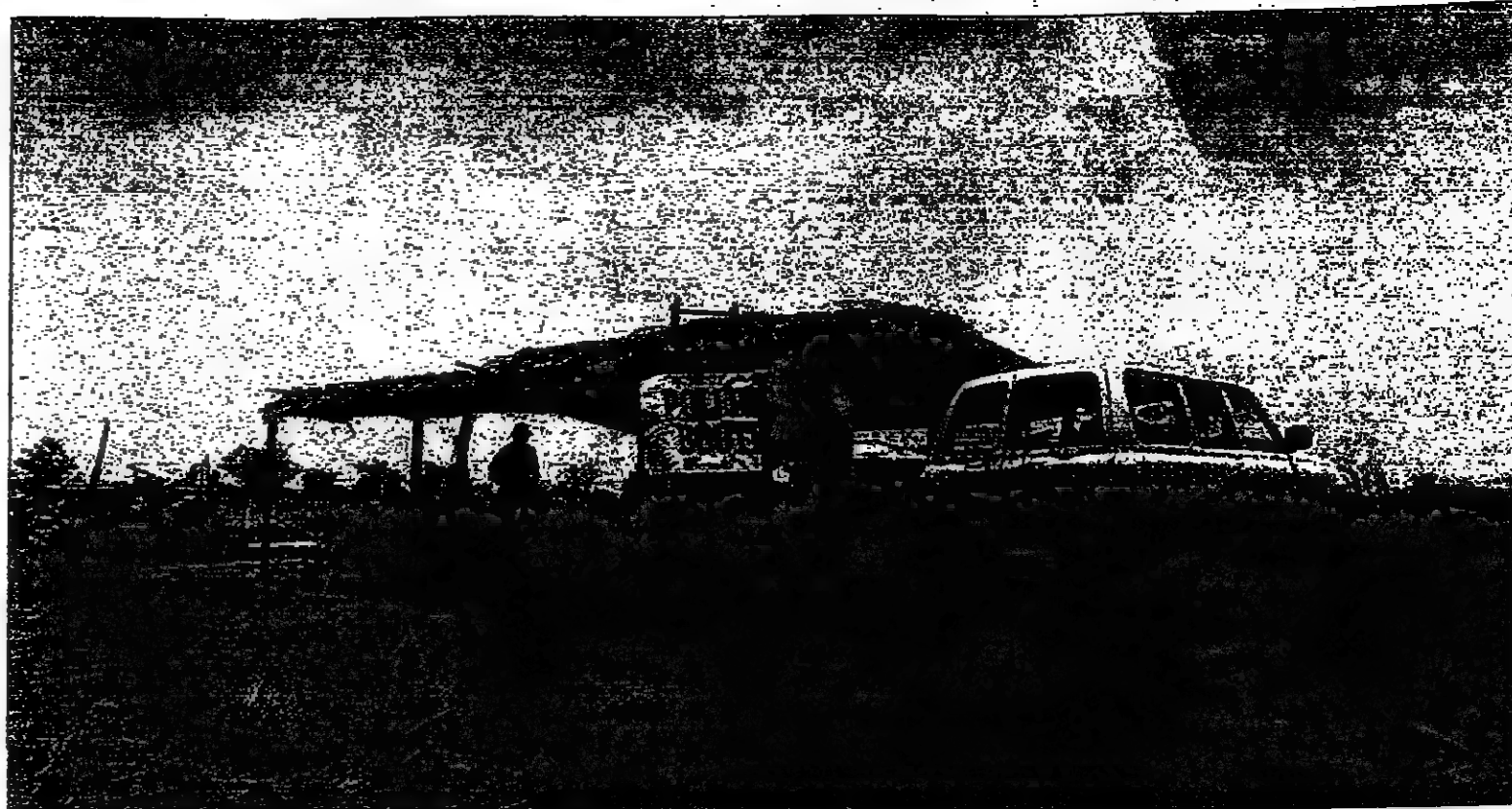
Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, a Cabinet minister, spoke out against plans allegedly drawn up by the army for harsh new forms of collective punishment against the Palestinians under Mr Arafat's control, including cuts in their water and electricity supplies and denial of their present access to Israeli hospital services which are much superior to those available in the poorly-equipped Palestin-

ian medical facilities. The crisis atmosphere gripping the country has been worsened by the reappearance for the first time since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin last November of crowds of extreme right-wing Jews openly calling for the murder of Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister. Mr Peres's opinion poll rating has slumped severely three months before the election due on May 29.

The angry Jews who gathered near the spot where many of those who were killed on Sunday died were not interfered with by the police as they chanted ominously "Peres is the next in line". "Traitor, traitor" and "Enough of dreams, we want security."

In a related development, Mr Arafat, the hard-pressed leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, told diplomats who visited his Gaza headquarters that a shadowy group of Israeli former army officers opposed to the peace process were co-operating with Islamic extremists also opposed to the 1993 agreement in mounting the latest wave of bombings.

Mr Arafat's claims were angrily dismissed by the Israeli authorities and by many Israeli commentators, some of whom said that the PLO leader had made similar accusations before.



Voters in the Aboriginal community of Jimbalakudj cast their ballots early at a mobile booth east of Derby in northwest Australia. Voting started on Sunday in this outback area of the Kalgoorlie constituency which, at 878,000 square miles, is the largest in the world.



Paul Keating campaigning in Brisbane yesterday

Australia faces cliffhanger as Keating closes election gap

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

THE Australian general election this weekend has the makings of a cliffhanger. After weeks of trailing badly in the polls, Paul Keating, the Prime Minister, last night found himself just two points behind his rival, John Howard, the Liberal leader.

The Morgan survey put the ruling Labor party at 49 per cent and the opposition at 51 per cent, a four-point change over the past week. Another

poll 24 hours earlier gave the opposition a ten-point lead. Mr Keating told supporters in the Queensland city of Rockhampton: "We are starting to see the whites of the Liberal Party's eyes."

Mr Howard acknowledged: "There is a certain electricity in the air."

Mr Howard, who is leading the Liberals at an election for the second time, is proving as wily as his rival. But he has

not been helped by colleagues in the opposition coalition whose comments have been perceived as racist.

Bob Katter, a National Party candidate who got into trouble for claiming that "slavery-crazed ideologues" were persecuting ordinary Australians, found himself in more hot water yesterday for saying the only children in rural areas to get higher education were rich or Aborigines.

Soldiers banned in Larnaca

Nicosia: British soldiers have been banned from a tourist area of Larnaca in Cyprus after off-duty servicemen were involved in a pub brawl that one barman likened to the fighting in Bosnia (Michael Theodorou writes).

The incident comes as army commanders wait for a Cypriot court to pass judgment on three Royal Green Jackets accused of killing a young Danish woman in the resort of Ayia Napa. The town has been out of bounds to British servicemen since her death in September 1994. The defence begins its summing up today. The incident in Larnaca was played down by the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment, which reviews the ban today. The barman insists he will bring charges.

Five-star hotel rises from ashes of Beirut conflict

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

IN a potent symbol of Lebanon's phoenix-style recovery from its 15-year civil war, the legendary Commodore Hotel, one of the most renowned watering holes for foreign journalists, reopened yesterday for the first time since it was wrecked in militia gun battles in 1987.

Along with the Belfast Europa and the Caravelle in Saigon, the Commodore and its overworked bar complete with spies, Levantine glamour girls and an expensive purchased (and not always recognised) immunity from the fighting outside, became indelibly associated with the conflict being fought all round it.

Minus Coco, the African grey parrot who used to send new arrivals diving grimaces, reassuredly for cover with his all too accurate imitations of incoming shells, the hotel again welcomed guests after a £22

million refurbishment that has given it a five-star status never enjoyed in the days when militiamen fought room-to-room grenade duels. Coco, the property of Chris



A porter unloads bags at the new Commodore

Drake, the veteran BBC correspondent honoured for his role in covering the fighting and forever after referred to by impressed hotel staff as "Lord Drake", was kidnapped by a gunman at the height of the fighting between Christian and Muslim private armies and never reappeared.

"What the press remembers is not what they are going to see," said Tarek Boubess, a member of the family that owns the Commodore and has rebuilt it as a luxury venue for the tourists and businessmen beginning to return.

In the revived Beirut, where the loudest bangs these days come from champagne corks popping in new nightclubs, the Boubess family has held on to one relic of the past in the reopened Commodore: the News Bar, named as "a tribute to the reporters who stayed here for years".

Rebel's family seek end to ordeal

FROM MARK HUBAND IN RABAT

THE six children of a former Moroccan army general, who died after trying to overthrow King Hassan, pleaded yesterday for an end to the 24 years of victimisation they have suffered in revenge for their father's ambitions.

Defying a security service ban on their contacts with the press, the six children of General Muhammad Oufkir issued a statement in Rabat, pleading with the Moroccan Government to "let us live our lives and let us exist". The statement came five years after they were released into strictly controlled liberty. Before that, they had spent 19 years in captivity. All the family have remained under the

observation of the Moroccan security services since their release in 1991. They have not been allowed to work or associate freely with friends; nor have they been allowed passports with which to travel abroad. The six children, five girls and a boy, who are now in their twenties or thirties, were hustled away in a windowless van from the family villa in the smart Rabat suburb of Souissi on December 23, 1972.

Four months earlier General Oufkir had died, officially by suicide, although his clothes showed that he had been shot in the back after being implicated in an attempt by air force pilots to shoot down

King Hassan's Boeing 727 en route from France.

The night the family disappeared their villa was razed to the ground, the children and their mother, Fatima, incarcerated in a ramshackle castle and the name Oufkir was officially deleted. For 15 years nothing was heard of them, until 1987 when the children escaped from their prison and contacted Radio France International to plead directly to King Hassan for their release. Within hours they had been captured and disappeared until finally they were freed as part of a general amnesty in 1991. They were never charged.

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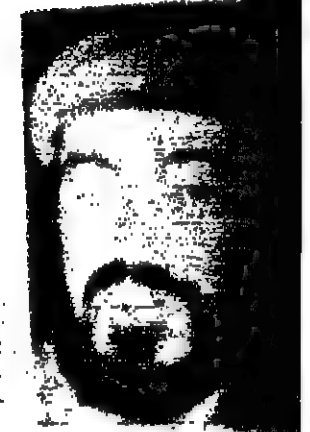
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González focused on education issues

González losing appeal for youth

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN FUENLABRADA

FELIPE GONZÁLEZ beamed broadly throughout an hour-long, brittle-voiced speech, delivered without notes or pause. A mass of starchy-eyed young faces beamed back at him, chanting in shrill adoration.

If the opinion polls are to be believed, Señor González's Socialist Party will lose this Sunday's Spanish elections. But nobody here was prepared to believe in anything but another González victory.

The Prime Minister basked in the applause. He was addressing the Young Socialists of Fuenlabrada, a dormitory town ten miles south of Madrid. Fuenlabrada is an ugly conurbation of hastily-built flats. Its graffiti-scarred streets are papered with González election posters.

Many of those present will vote for the first time on Sunday, and will vote for Señor González, but they are in a minority. Projections indicate that only one in three first-time voters will vote Socialist.

The rest will vote for the United Left of Julio Anguita and for José María Aznar's conservatives.

This is a change from the past, when the youth vote was regarded as the exclusive preserve of the Socialists. Unemployment, which stands at 23 per cent, affects the young disproportionately.

In Fuenlabrada Señor González focused on matters close to the young. "You have free education. You have a good education. Your parents had neither. Who gave that to you? The Socialists. Who will take that away? Aznar."

EU warned not to push rights issue at Asian summit

BY CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND JAMES PRINGLE

EUROPEAN leaders were cautioned by the European Commission yesterday to avoid needling Asian sensitivities over human rights when they meet the region's statesmen in Bangkok at the weekend for a summit to pave the way to new trading and political bonds.

Jacques Santer, the Commission president, joined colleagues in emphasising the delicate political nature of the new relationship Europe hopes to forge with the emerging economic powerhouse of the 21st century. "I want to avoid creating an atmosphere of confrontation. We do not want to be there like former colonial powers," Mr Santer said.

The leaders — including John Major, the Prime Minister, Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, President Chirac of France, Li Peng of China and Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan — will meet on Friday and Saturday.

While Europe represented 25 per cent of all Asian imports in 1970, the figure sank to only 15 per cent in 1994, though lately the region has become the fastest growing market for EU exports. But the EU's exports to East Asia still lag behind those of Japan and America, as does investment: only 1 per cent of Europe's foreign direct investment targets Asia. For Asians, according to diplomats in the region, the summit is a chance to strike a balance to the economic and

political strength of America, and in the case of the seven nations of South-East Asia, Japan and China.

In the biggest collective outing by EU statesmen, all but four of the 15 leaders are to meet the heads of ten Asian nations to give force to Europe's aim of forging a commercial and strategic relationship that will balance Asia's ties to the United States. The effort is deemed urgent in the light of East Asia's accelerating economic might and neglect by Europe as the region joined North America in the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (Apec).

Britain, France and Germany are adamant that complaints over social conditions in Asia should not be allowed to sour what both sides are billing as a confidence-building summit.

Human rights groups and political parties are bringing pressure, especially in the northern EU countries, on leaders to broach such issues as child labour, Chinese orphanages and the minimal social conditions in many Asian states. Portugal pledged yesterday to take up Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, its former colony.

The Thai Government, echoing sentiment throughout the region, has told Europe that human rights issues are irrelevant to the summit.

The EU hopes the summit can clear the old historical baggage

which has dogged both sides of the Euro-Asian relationship. Manuel Marín, the Commissioner for the developing countries, last night summed up the "stereotypes" that should be discarded.

Europeans tended to see Asia as a world of sweatshops and unfair competition that is putting them out of work, he said. "The Asians see Europeans as a protectionist fortress with the bad habit of preaching at them. Bangkok will be a first step to getting rid of these clichés." He might have added that Asians also see Europe as the land of lazy workers and good shopping.

On the Asian side, the meeting groups Japan, China and South Korea with the seven members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean). These are Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Australia was kept out at Malaysian insistence. The EU wants India to join future meetings, which will culminate with another summit in Britain, in two years.

According to Atsushi Tsidanya, Japan's Ambassador to the EU, the Bangkok summit will be the first occasion in which Europeans and Asians are meeting as equals. The summit would be important in "promoting mutual perceptions", he said. Asia sensed that Europe offered an untapped source of investment and that the EU would acquire more clout with monetary union.

Sour note from Pavarotti's wife

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME



Pavarotti photographed kissing his secretary

THE great tenor Luciano Pavarotti yesterday faced a stern lecture from his wife on adultery. But Signora Pavarotti took the unusual step of admonishing her husband through a letter to the press.

The latest issue of the magazine *Chi* carries photographs of Signor Pavarotti, 60, in the sea off Barbados, passionately kissing Nicoletta Mantovani, 26, his secretary. "Thanks to him, I have become a woman," she says.

In her letter, Signora Pavarotti, 58, strikes a sad and reflective rather than furious note. Like

many successful men, she says, Luciano has had a number of "affectionate relationships" in his life. But until Signorina Mantovani he had always managed these liaisons with tact.

Signor Pavarotti had now overstepped the mark by revealing an affair "which should have remained in the private sphere". The tenor, his wife writes acidly, is "in the sunset of his career". She stops short of threatening divorce but, addressing him directly, adds: "Things are passing for you, too. Euphoria will be followed by sorrow."



An officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs special rapid reaction squad checking a suspect's identity card during an anti-gangster operation

Mobs rule plush haunts

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

VISITORS to Moscow and St Petersburg often ask which places to avoid for personal safety. The unfortunate answer is that they are as likely to be victims of a stray bullet in the lobby of their glass-and-marble hotel as anywhere else.

In fact, evidence suggests the haunts of the rich are the most dangerous places. So it proved for the unfortunate British businessman John Hyden in the expensive café of his St Petersburg hotel.

In December, guests having coffee in the café of Moscow's most expensive hotel, the Baitschug-Kempinski (£245 a night for a double room) were forced to lie on the floor for half an hour as riot police burst in on the track of an armed gang. The same day the German-run Angara

beer restaurant in central Moscow installed metal detectors after a shooting in which a Chechen was killed and a British businessman, Peter Sommerhill, was wounded in the arm.

Russia's annual murder rate "stabilised" last year at 31,700 — most the victims of organised crime. In Moscow there are estimated to be about 20 gangland murders a week.

The unloveliest Westerners in Russia are Finns and Britons, the Russian Interior Ministry said yesterday. Last year about 550 crimes were recorded against Britons and about 900 against Finns. Muggings, burglary and car theft are the biggest problems and the detection rate is poorer than in the West.

Russia's new gun-toting culture has invaded even the most respectable places. A British businessman recently took a Russian guest to lunch in the restaurant of the Academy of Sciences, the preserve of Moscow's scientific elite. A mobster strode up to the table, saying he had reserved it. The businessman objected. The mobster drew a gun, put it to his guest's head and said: "Get out of my table!"

Rifkind in talks with Primakov

ONLY hours before Russia was to be admitted formally to the Council of Europe, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, met Yevgeni Primakov, the new Russian Foreign Minister, in Strasbourg yesterday to review the prospects for peace in Chechnya (Michael Binyon writes).

The two men also discussed stability in Europe and the West's relations with Russia.

Roof-top rescue

Seoul: A fire tore through a leading department store here sending hundreds of terrified shoppers fleeing for safety, police said. Ten staff trapped on the roof were rescued by ladder. (Reuters)

Plea for Craxi

Rome — Bettino Craxi, the gravely ill former Italian Prime Minister sentenced in absentia to 18 years in jail for corruption, wants to return to Italy from Tunisia despite the risk of arrest, his lawyer said.

70 die in plane

Khartoum: All 70 people aboard a Sudanese military transport plane were killed when it crashed on Monday, 25 miles south of the capital, the official Sudanese news agency reported. (Reuters)

Second ballot

Freetown: People scared to vote on Monday, to choose Sierra Leone's President and parliament, had a second chance. Violence has killed 27 and injured Paul Kamara, a minister. (AP/AFR)

Death sentence

Nairobi: Two Kenyans who appealed against 10-year jail sentences and ten strokes of the cane for robbery, hoping for lighter sentences, were instead sentenced to death for robbery with violence. (AFP)

Pay restraint

Moscow: A struggling Russian industrial plant in the southern city of Voronezh is so short of rubbles it is paying staff in Chinese-made brassieres it swapped for machinery, a newspaper said. (AP)

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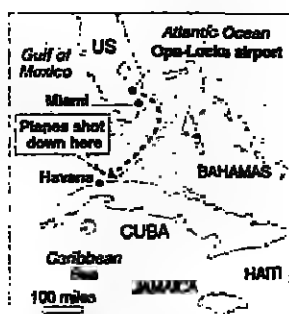
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President ignores hardline demands to isolate island over Castro's attack on planes



Shooting puts paid to normal relations

FROM DAVID ADAMS
IN MIAMI

WHATEVER the circumstances surrounding Saturday's shooting down of two civilian planes piloted by a Miami group, Brothers to the Rescue, any move towards normalisation of relations between Fidel Castro's Cuba and the United States is shelved for now, analysts say.

"It's going to do lasting damage," said Arturo Villar, a Cuban-born international financial consultant in Miami. "People are finally going to realise that he [Castro] won't change and he just wants to keep control."

Analysts say the incident was probably the result of an internal political battle in Cuba between moderates and hardliners.

Gillian Gunn-Clissold, a Cuba expert at Georgetown University, says there has been mounting pressure within the military to shoot down a leaflet-dropping plane.

The latest crisis is also likely to affect the broader reform debate within Cuba's Government. "People who were more in favour of reforms and normalisation are probably weakened by this because it closes avenues for greater contact," said Damian Fernandez of Florida International University.

The European Union, with which Cuba is negotiating an economic co-operation treaty, has joined in condemning Havana's action.

Cautious Clinton exploits split in Cuban lobby

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

FIDEL CASTRO has been a major headache for every American leader since Eisenhower, but President Clinton is the first to dare to challenge the Cuban-American hardliners who demand the total isolation of their homeland until the dictator falls.

Mr Clinton announced several punitive measures on Monday in response to Cuba's shooting down of two unarmed light aircraft, but he refused to sever the links to the Cuban people that his Administration has been fostering.

Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a Florida Republican congressman, called Mr Clinton's response "tragically insufficient". Republican presidential candidates also rounded on the President. Robert Dole, the Senate leader, accused Mr Clinton of "coddling Castro" and said he failed to understand "the only way to deal with Castro's tyranny is with real firmness and pressure".

But Mr Clinton's announcement was driven by a belief in the White House that continuing to reach out to the Cuban people is the best course, both politically and strategically.

Florida is America's fourth largest state and central to Mr Clinton's re-election hopes, but Cuban-American hardliners — who tend to be first-generation exiles and hard-core Republicans from Miami's "Little Havana" district — would never vote for Mr Clinton anyway. However, hardline groups are increasingly being challenged by younger Cuban-Americans who have never lived in Cuba, played no part in the Bay of Pigs invasion and favour a more liberal policy.

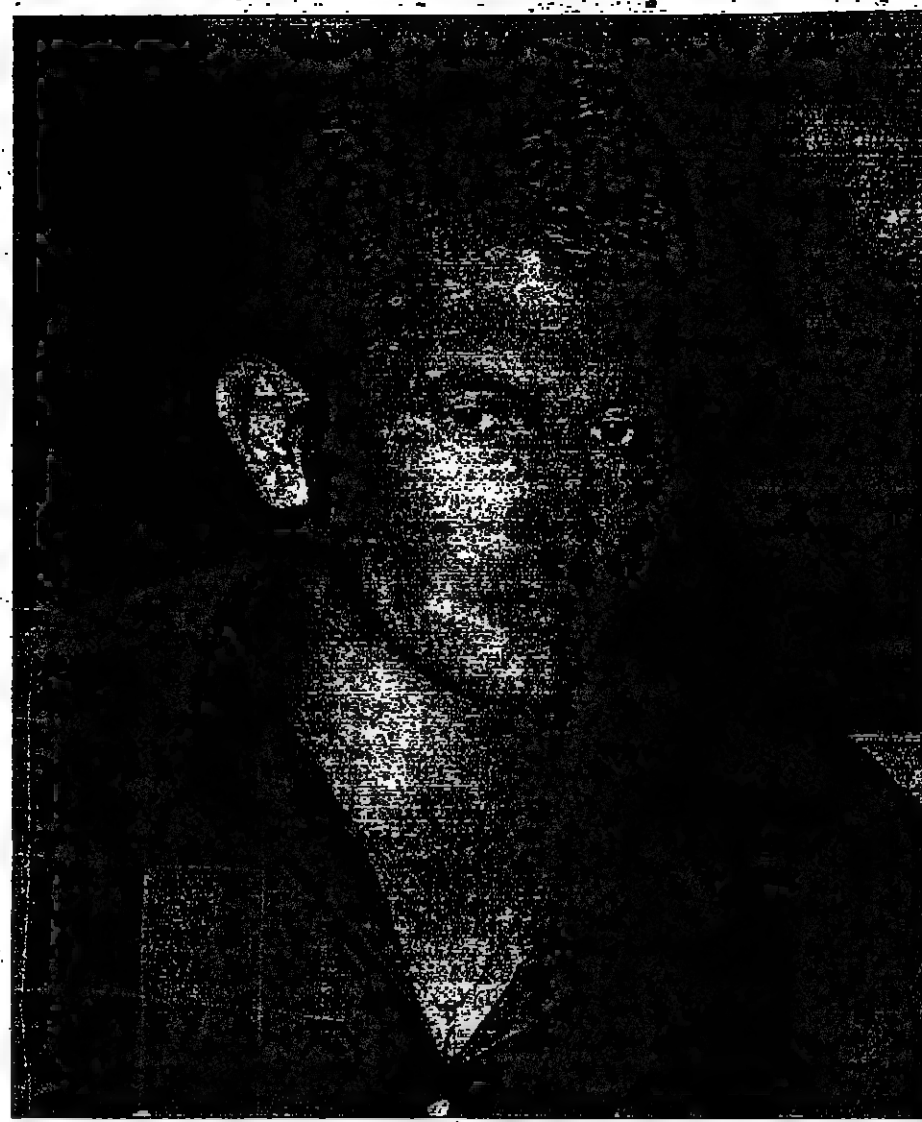
It is these second and third generation Cuban-Americans whose support Mr Clinton covets in a state he lost by a mere 100,000 votes in 1992. It is this split in the Cuban-American community that makes it possible for him to diverge from the policies of his White House predecessors.

Monday's announcement was crafted to avoid charges that Mr Clinton was "soft" on Cuba. He angrily denounced the shootings, suspended charter flights from the US to Cuba, and said he would support legislation to tighten economic sanctions and use frozen Cuban assets to compensate the victims' families.

However, Cuban-Americans may still telephone relatives in Cuba or travel there via a third country, and Mr Clinton preserved the new cultural, humanitarian and journalistic links with the Cuban people. A senior US official said the measures were "focused as tightly as possible on the Cuban Government".

□ New York. The United States bullied the United Nations Security Council into denouncing Cuba's shooting down of the two aircraft, despite resistance from Russia and China (James Bone writes). The final statement was weakened at the insistence of Russia, which objected to a reference to Cuba's "unlawful use of force".

Leading article, page 19



Juan Pablo Roque, a member of Brothers to the Rescue, who has appeared on Cuban television claiming that the exile pilot group is involved in terrorism

US says missing pilot was a spy

BY DAVID ADAMS

WHEN Juan Pablo Roque, a Cuban exile and pilot, appeared on Havana television on Monday night, it was the first his wife had seen of him since he left their Miami home last Friday.

Señor Roque told Cuban viewers that he had returned to Cuba to reveal "the true nature" of the exile pilot group, Brothers to the Rescue, owners of the two planes shot down on Saturday. Señor Roque said he had flown home the day before.

The group was involved in paramilitary operations and planned to conduct "terrorist" operations in Cuba, Señor Roque added.

Members of Brothers to the Rescue have denied his claims, saying the group is dedicated to non-violent change. "We have no skeletons in our closet," said José Basulto, the president.

US officials say they believe Señor Roque was a Cuban spy who was sent to Miami to infiltrate exile organisations. If he was a spy, he did a good job, associates say. He even wrote a book, *Deserter*, about his escape from Cuba four years ago by swimming to the US naval base at Guantánamo. The book, published in Miami, describes his pilot training in the Soviet Union and criticises the corruption and inefficiency of the Cuban military.

In Miami, the pilots are considered heroes for their search-and-rescue missions over the Florida Straits. In 1,800 missions they have saved thousands of Cuban rafters.

Señor Roque disappeared from Miami suddenly on Friday after telling his wife he was going on a mission.

"I am devastated," she said. "I have been betrayed. I don't know what else to feel. He could have been a spy all along."

Havana breaches the code for policing airspace

BY MARK WELLER

CAT and mouse is a dangerous game. On several occasions, aircraft of the Brothers to the Rescue, the Miami-based exile group, unlawfully strayed into Cuban airspace, apparently to challenge the Castro regime. Repeated warnings were issued to the pilots, but consistently ignored. It seemed inevitable that the authorities in Havana would finally pounce upon the Cuban exiles who had toyed with them.

Cuba argues that it was fully entitled to protect its sovereign airspace, which extends 12 nautical miles. Unlike cases involving actual or imminent armed attacks, the

lawful responses to peaceful aerial intrusions are regulated within the framework of the 1944 Chicago Convention.

After the downing in 1983 of a South Korean airliner which had overflown the militarily sensitive Kamchatka peninsula in the then Soviet Union, the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organisation adopted an amendment to the convention which specifically rules out "the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight". This provision was adopted by all states, including Cuba and America.

The amendment is not in force, as it has received only 80 out of the required 102 ratifications by states.

Interestingly, neither Cuba nor the US has ratified it, indicating perhaps a certain unease about spelling out this obligation in clear and formal treaty terms.

Nevertheless, the procedures for dealing with civil aircraft which enter foreign airspace without authorisation are detailed in one of 18 legally binding appendices to the original Chicago Convention. They have been frequently updated.

According to Appendix 2, interception of civil aircraft shall be undertaken only as a last resort, using a method "designed to avoid any hazard for the intercepted aircraft" and "with due regard for the safety of navigation of civil aircraft". The

International Civil Aviation Organisation has issued rules for interception procedures, involving radio signals from the ground and from intercepting aircraft, optical signals from clearly designated positions in the air and, as a last resort, showing the glowing afterburners of a jet, provided this does not endanger the intercepted plane.

The authorities in Havana would have been entitled to use these means to force the aircraft to land, assuming they had indeed intruded into Cuban airspace in this instance. Had they escaped once again, Cuba could have complained to the aviation organisation's council, asserting that Washington was consistently

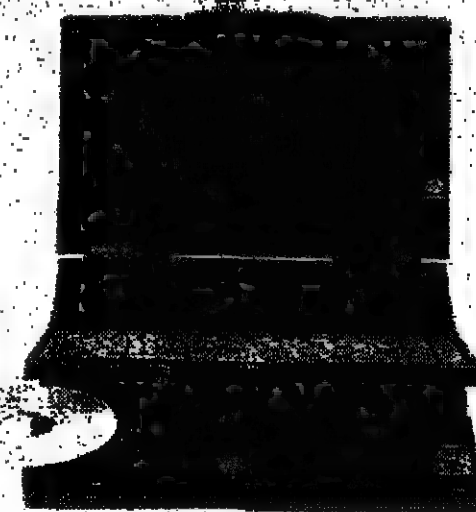
failing to discipline the crew of the planes which were registered in the US. Instead, the council will now confirm that states are no longer entitled to use all means to protect their exclusive jurisdiction over airspace, even if consistently provoked. And, as Washington demonstrated only last week when finally agreeing to pay compensation for having erroneously shot down an Iranian airliner in the Gulf in 1988, Cuba is liable for damages.

Mark Weller is an assistant director of studies at the Centre for International Studies in the University of Cambridge, where he lectures on international law.

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Republican 'outlaw' shows who is a sure shot when it comes to free advertising

Media bunfight at the OK Corral as Buchanan rides in

FROM TOM RHODES IN TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA

A REPUBLICAN outlaw rode into Tombstone, promised to bury his enemies in nearby Boot Hill graveyard and swaggered into the OK Corral. He struggled back the long black coat, revealing a glistening Colt at his side, and stood steadily beside Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday.

The still figures of Frank and Tom McLaury, the Clinton brothers and Billy Claiborne were poised to draw. America's most famous gunfight was about to unfold under stormy Arizona skies.

On October 26, 1881, it had taken less than half a minute and more than 25 shots before the McLaurys and Billy Clinton lay dead in the dust. Virgil and Morgan Earp, brothers of the infamous lawman, were injured and the "town too tough to die" became the stuff of legend.

This week it took a little longer for Pat Buchanan, the

Republican presidential candidate, to exact perhaps the most bizarre publicity stunt thus far in his campaign to win the party nomination.

Dressed in denim shirt and brown corduroys on arrival, Mr Buchanan accepted the key to the town from Joe Perotti, its Democratic but supportive Mayor, hardly said a word to the assembled citizens and stalked off to the OK Corral pursued by dozens of cameramen and reporters.

His Secret Service detail, shielding the public from his candidate, allowed media members into the famous courtyard where the lifeless figures of all nine gunmen stand in their proper places. Everyone wondered how the master of free advertisement could create the image he wanted broadcast across the nation yesterday as Arizona went to the polls for its Republican primary.

In advance, his aides had already found the answer and changed the sign under Billy Clinton. It now read Billy Clinton. Mr Buchanan, wishing for five minutes to change, appeared in a long black coat and cowboy boots. The pistol remained firmly in its holster and the journalist-journalist was ready for his captive audience.

"Pull the gun out, Pat," a cameraman said. "Give us the killer look for the camera, Pat," another said. However, Mr Buchanan, for all his bravado in front of the powerful lobbyists at the National Rifle Association, was visibly unhappy around guns. "The Secret Service wouldn't want me to and anyway I might shoot myself in the foot," he said.

More important, of course, the prospect of a candidate pointing a pistol at a mock President Clinton was a joke too far even for the Buchanan camp. Did he see himself as a latter-day Wyatt Earp, a college asked, "I think I am probably portrayed more as Johnny Ringo," the commentator replied without a moment's hesitation. Ringo was a bushwhacker known for shooting others in the back during Tombstone's heyday, a typically appropriate analogy for the man whom the Republican establishment views as an outlaw.

"I cannot believe he is doing this. It is ridiculous," the girl from *Time* magazine muttered. But there was very serious method to this apparent madness. By yesterday morning every news channel had used pictures of the cowboy candidate and all the Arizona newspapers carried the photograph on their front pages.

In just half an hour, Mr Buchanan had achieved what Steve Forbes, the *Wall Street Journal* publisher, had spent nearly a year trying to accomplish with his paid television advertising.



The Sydney Morning Herald underlines President Clinton's joy as the success of the Buchanan bandwagon divides Republican ranks

Bandwagon runs into 'extremist' hitch

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

A SENIOR member of Pat Buchanan's campaign team ran into trouble yesterday over links to a dinner at which tributes were paid to a man who murdered an abortion doctor.

The news came as polls showed the conservative commentator is splitting the Republican Party and that Republican voters are very unhappy with their choice of candidates.

The *Los Angeles Times* revealed that Michael Farris, one of Mr Buchanan's four campaign co-chairmen, attended the banquet in January at which the killer and other anti-abortion activists jailed for acts of violence were honoured. Mr Farris, a prominent member of the religious Right who sought Virginia's lieutenant-governorship in 1993, said he was unaware of the banquet's purpose when he agreed to attend and left when he realised. But the report reinforced the impression that Mr Buchanan works with extremists.

Earlier this month another of Mr Buchanan's co-chairmen, Larry Pratt, stepped down over charges that he was linked to white supremacists. A poll in *The New York Times* yesterday showed nearly half of all Republicans believed Mr Buchanan, now one of their party's leading presidential candidates, was

an extremist and 48 per cent said he could never win November's general election.

Mr Buchanan has challenged the Republican Party's commitment to free trade, internationalism, big business and immigration, but few issues threaten the Republican coalition as strongly as abortion. Just 23 per cent agreed with Mr Buchanan that all abortions should be banned, while 24 per cent favoured abortion on demand and 51 per cent backed tougher restrictions.

The same poll showed Robert Dole still the most popular candidate among Republican voters, with 39 per cent support compared to Mr Buchanan's 25 per cent and Lamar Alexander's 12 per cent, but 50 per cent wanted a better choice.

Two other surveys reinforced the impression of disarray in the Republican Party. A *Newsweek* poll showed 47 per cent of Republicans were dissatisfied with the present field, while 58 per cent believed Mr Buchanan was splitting the party and hurting its chances of regaining the White House.

A *USA Today* poll showed 62 per cent of all voters saying they could not vote for Mr Buchanan this November and 51 per cent of Republicans wanting

new candidates. This poll showed President Clinton beating Mr Dole by 16 points, Mr Alexander 19 points and Mr Buchanan by 24 points.

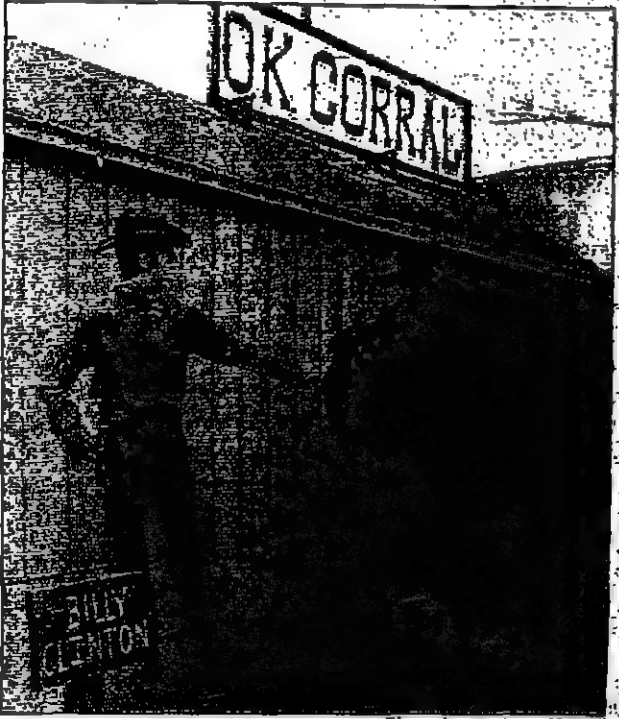
There is no mechanism for a new candidate entering the primary contest at this late stage. That could only happen if no candidate had obtained a

interest in this question has reached a heightened state," one Republican official told *Time* magazine.

Mr Buchanan, who gave interviews to 28 local radio stations as Arizona held its primary yesterday, said he felt like "one large blob of scarred tissue" after all the attacks on him, and said the new definition of "extremist" was "anyone who beats Bob Dole in New Hampshire". He continued: "Every great conservative leader who has emerged has been called names. I'm going to forget these insults."

The turmoil within the Dole campaign also became apparent as the reasons for Monday's staff shake-up were revealed. Officials said Bill Lacy, the deputy chairman, and Bill McInturff, the pollster, were removed after predicting Mr Dole would win both New Hampshire and Delaware last week. Mr Dole lost both and Steve Forbes gained a new lease of life by winning Delaware.

Mr Dole was said to be losing his temper more and more often and once to have angrily rounded on his wife, Elizabeth, after she pressed him to be more upbeat. He joked to reporters that his message had changed so often it could be considered the "flavour of the week".



Pat Buchanan gets ready for a showdown with Billy Clinton, renamed Billy Clinton for the day

French plan football hall of fame

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A £20 million project is under way to create the world's first international museum of football in Paris by 1998, when France will host the soccer World Cup.

An American company in partnership with FIFA, the international football authority, is exploring several sites for the museum, which will be modelled on American sporting halls of fame and known as the International Football Hall of Champions.

FIFA is giving part of the renowned Langton collection of football artefacts to the museum. Assembled over 30 years by the journalist Harry Langton, the collection includes items dating back to the origins of football in ancient Greece and China.

The museum will also display soccer strips worn by famous players, rosettes from historic matches and one of the earliest leather footballs. Visitors will be able to "play" against famous footballers using interactive and virtual reality technology. Great players past and present will be inducted into the Hall of Champions every year. Sir Stanley Matthews, now aged 81, has been nominated as one of the first.

The Paris museum, which is expected to open by March 1998, may come as a blow to the city of Sheffield, which also plans for a world football museum.

Football, pages 44 & 45

Jacqueline Kennedy's fans flock to buy Camelot relics

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

ADMIRERS of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis are clamouring for the chance to buy a piece of Camelot when the estate of the former American First Lady goes on the auction block in New York.

Sotheby's has received more than 16,000 orders for the 534-page catalogue of the auction, without which customers will not be admitted to the three-day sale, due to begin on April 23. With space in the saleroom limited to about 2,000 potential buyers a day, the auction house is planning to conduct a lottery to decide who will receive admission tickets. A similar raffle will also be held for 15,000 pairs of tickets to the five-day exhibition that will precede the sale.

For a few hundred dollars, fans will be able to buy their own roommates of the legendary "Jackie O", such as her high-school French grammar book or some of President Kennedy's old golf clubs. Among the cheaper items are a monogrammed sterling silver Tiffany tape measure,

three used saddles, one of President Kennedy's old hat boxes and a green stool with an estimated value of \$30 (£19). The maroon suit worn by the former First Lady when she gave her famous televised tour of the White House in 1962 is also for sale.

Sotheby's has placed a remarkably low estimate of \$5 million on the 1,200 lots in a sign that nobody really knows



Kennedy Onassis: her private life not on show

what to expect from the sale. The auction will feature some valuable items, such as the 40-carat diamond she received from her second husband, Aristotle Onassis. The stone, cut from the 601-carat Lesotho Diamond, is expected to sell for about \$600,000.

The Kennedy Onassis estate was put up for sale by her two children, Caroline, 38, and John, 35, only after they donated many papers and photographs to the John F. Kennedy Library. Their decision nevertheless has prompted complaints that they are organising an "everything-most-go garage sale" of their mother's personal effects.

Connoisseurs say the items on sale betray surprisingly little about the dead woman. About the most personal lot on auction is a black enamel lighter engraved with a "J", a discreet reminder that she was a secret chain-smoker. The sale does not include any of her favourite Oleg Cassini suits, any sunglasses or any pillbox hats.

Fight for Onassis riches sharpens

Athens: The heiress to the Onassis family fortune, 11-year-old Athena - Roussel, could be elbowed out of her inheritance because she cannot speak Greek, according to the foundation managing the Aristotle Onassis estate (John Carr writes).

The claim masks a struggle for control of the estate

worth anywhere from \$50 million to several hundred million dollars but not including the Onassis shipping business - between the foundation and her French father, Thierry Roussel, widower of Christine Onassis.

To stop Mr Roussel, the foundation's president, Stelios Papadimitriou, says

Athena will be a mere tool with no will of her own, and she is not even Greek.

Mr Roussel claims liquid assets have dwindled 70 per cent in ten years to a mere \$47 million. Last week a Swiss appeals court threw out his attempt to be allowed to administer the estate revenues until his daughter is 18.

'Tens of thousands' killed in Rwanda

FROM AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE IN PARIS

TENS of thousands of Hutu civilians have been massacred in Rwanda since the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took power in Kigali in July 1994, the French daily *Libération* reported yesterday.

The RPF "is to blame for very large-scale massacres, which according to a conservative estimate, have cost the lives of more than 100,000 Hutus," it said. Most of the killings took place in 1994 as the RPF took over the central African country, ending the genocide of between 500,000 and a million Tutsis by the Hutus. The Rwandan Government has already rejected allegations of RPF massacres.

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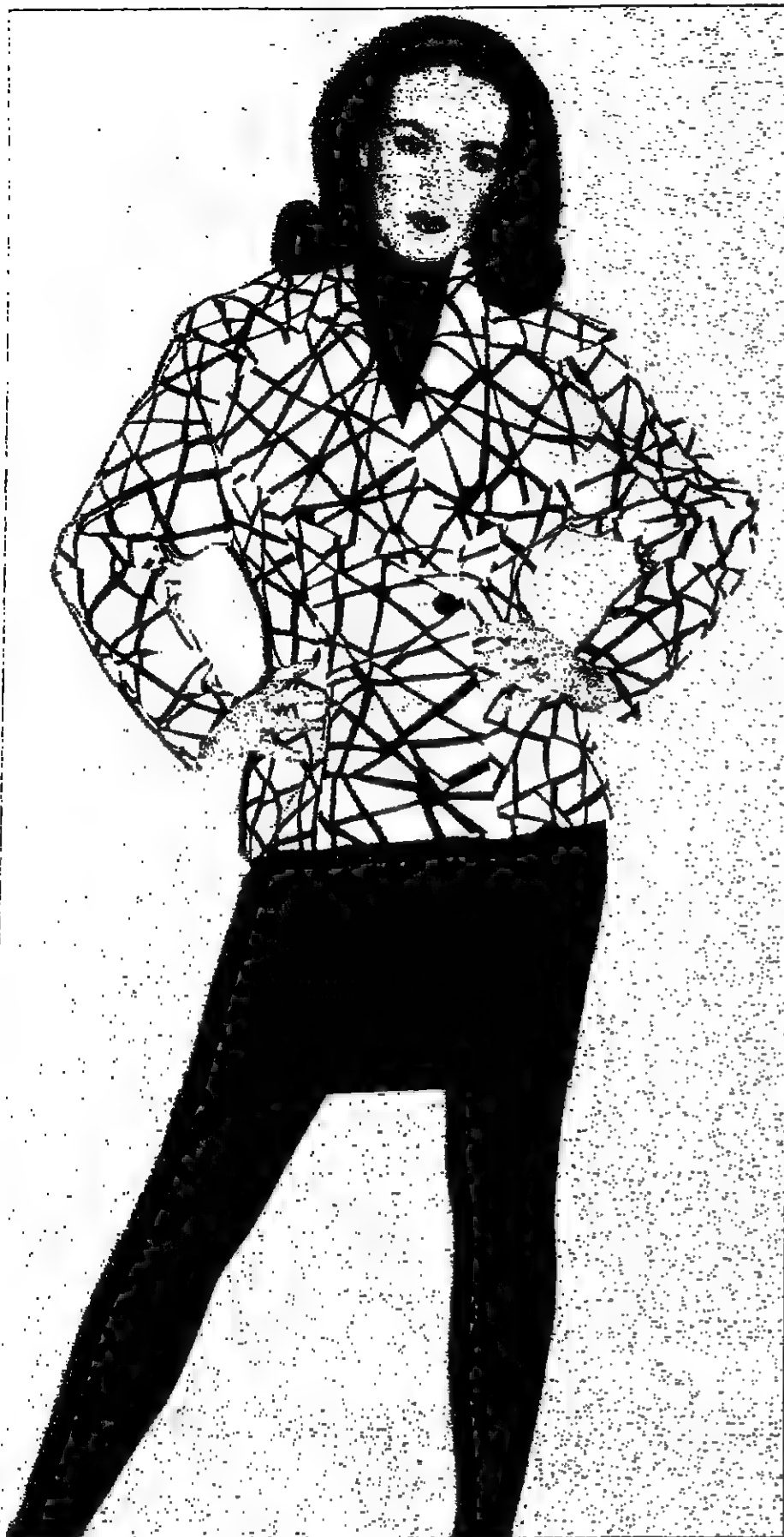
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Exclusive: the Jasper Conran autumn look



ABOVE: Black stretch viscose/wool dress, about £495

LEFT: Black/white cracked ice jacket, £550; black turtle-neck dress, £295

RIGHT: Viscose halter-neck, £250

Photographs by ROD NISSEN PETZER Make-up and hair by Anne Marie Lepetre



Fashion journalist of the year

IAIN R. WEBB

London Fashion Week kicks off this morning at the Natural History Museum in Kensington. Over the next four days there will be shows by John Rocha, Betty Jackson, Ben de Lisi and Alexander McQueen. However, there is one familiar British name who will not be presenting his collection.

Jasper Conran will be nowhere near the giant tents which house the shows. By the time the first model steps on to the catwalk he will have sold his collection, closed his order books, packed his bags, and will be on an aeroplane heading for the Caribbean. "I was going to do a show," Conran says, "but I was

scheduled for a Friday night slot and Milan Fashion Week starts on Saturday morning. You try getting a model worth her salt in London on Friday night when the Milan shows begin the next day.

"Anyway I have doing shows, I've always hated doing shows. It's the worst thing I can possibly imagine. I like

making clothes, making the shape, putting it together." Since he was 19 Conran has been "putting it together" with an assured hand. An incorrigible flirt, he also knows how to flatter women with more than mere words, with the cut and drape of his cloth. He is popular with customers and retailers alike.

"When he designs he thinks about what women want to wear, not what he thinks a fashion editor will want to photograph," says Josephine Turner, owner of the Knightsbridge store *A la Mode*, who stocks the designer's line. "He concentrates on beautiful fabrics and flattering shapes so that a woman knows she will look attractive."

"I believe that my job is to make women feel good about themselves," Conran says. "To feel thinner, sexier and more confident."

If Conran appears surprisingly pragmatic his designs reflect this. They work because Conran knows they will work. He fits his samples on his right-hand woman, managing director Amanda Verdan. "I try everything on Amanda and I look at her lifestyle," Conran says.

By this method he has honed his collection into a working wardrobe of desirable pieces, almost all of them shaded black. "It is the basis on my business," Conran says. "I walk along the King's Road on the way to my studio and 99.9 per cent of the people I see are dressed in black."

"People buy black because they don't get sick of it the same way they get sick of that fuchsia-striped whatever. More importantly it makes them look slim, and it doesn't get dirty in two minutes flat."

In black for winter 1996-97 Conran offers jackets which are cut to give curves, darted chiffon shirts printed with a spiralling squiggle design (this print features throughout the collection in brown, blue, and cream on dresses, skirts and tunics); leather as soft as a peach occasionally trimmed with fluffy Mongolian fur; and sexy crepe and jersey dresses, some with swishy chiffon or cut-wet skirts, others with a waterfall-draped hemline. Conran's personal favourites are his dazzling reflective striped shirts and cracked ice jackets. "I always know that there will be captivating evening dresses that I will buy and women will love to have," Turner says. This season is no different, with small square-



Black and brown chiffon printed shirt, about £250; black stretch viscose vest, £145; black stretch viscose skirt, £155

All clothes by Jasper Conran available at major department stores from July (Inquiries 0171-352 3572)

cut paillettes scattered on ballerina-length chiffon and puffed evening dresses which sparkle like tiny shards of metal.

Conran's clothes are commercial without being boring. Yet over the past year or so he has deliberately taken a low profile. "It's a designer's dilemma. Retailers demand continuity while the press requires new, new, new," Conran says.

He withdrew from the limelight because he suddenly felt as if he was on a treadmill. "My women's wear was licensed [owned by another company] and I didn't really feel that I was able to do the things I wanted to do. It was difficult to look someone in the eye and say, 'This is my latest idea, isn't it fabulous?' It was a good product being put out, but I know the difference between commercial and new. Now I have the licence back and I own the women's wear line again and I can do whatever the hell I like."

"In the end the most important person is the woman who puts her hand in her handbag, be it Prada or Gucci, and pays for that dress."

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Why I won't search for the deadly gene

Breast cancer may not be contagious but the fear of a genetic link is, especially when you give birth to a daughter. Taking the gene test, however, provides no satisfactory answers

A week and a half before my daughter was born, my sister died of breast cancer. (I am not fond of the confessional mode of columnising, but it is pertinent here. To tell to reveal my personal stake — if that is what it is — in all this would be wrong, even if to divulge it is uncomfortable.) Now, any such fusion between death and birth must always be tremendously hard, but the unbearable ironies seemed further pointed up for me by the nature of the disease. What had been an instrument of death in my sister's case was for me, or rather my baby, now sustaining life.

And though cancer might not be contagious, the fear of it is. What's more, there are familial links. Before I'd had a child I had never been so preoccupied with the possibility of dying young, even though my mother was herself only 48 when she died. But to have a child and to feel that you may not live long enough to look after her is a terrifying prospect. To know what it is to have your mother die — even though I was not so very young at the time — and fear you may be inflicting all that on your child is pretty well unbearable. And with a daughter an even more awful possibility loomed: my sister had been 32 when she died; I find that hard to live with as it is, but what if that were to happen to my daughter, too?

All this sounds very self-dramatising and embarrassing, and awkward, I know. Such private experiences may seem to translate uncomfortably into journalism, but the truth is, my reasons for writing this are not personal: I have no need for the couch or the confessional here. I simply feel it would be dishonest to pretend an objectivity that I cannot possibly have. For what concerns me here is genetic testing. Over the years I have grown more and more alert to news of the progress being made on this, and I watched *Living in the Shadow* on Channel 4 last night with more than purely journalistic interest.

Because everyone is so interested in genes now, and because genetics has acquired respectability and, more than that, is consid-



Vanessa Smith and her relatives have all taken the gene test

ered in news terms sexy, great weight is given to it. One woman in 12 develops breast cancer; that's a big number, although it should be remembered that 40 per cent of these are over 70. But only 5 per cent of all cases will be due to a genetic element that really is very small. The difficulty is, if it's your family that has the genetic tendency, then it isn't insignificant. Seeing those family trees on the television last night, with black dots to indicate those who had died of breast cancer, was appalling. All that black, all those dots littering the page.

If that is what it looks like when the genetic link exists, then I suppose those of us with less dramatic familial histories can relax. That's what the programme made one think, and I don't know if that can be right. After all, one does have much more chance of developing random breast cancer.

Still, that wasn't within the remit of the programme. And since those who are found to carry the breast cancer gene, BRCA1 or 2, have an 85 per cent chance of developing breast cancer, I can see the drive to isolate and focus on those cases. But what can genetic testing do? It still just tells you

whether you're likely — yes, even horrendously likely — to develop breast cancer. It cannot tell you that you will. And if you find you're not carrying the gene, then you still have a one in 12 chance of getting it. Actually, you have a bit more than that. According to the geneticist at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, the slight chance that the test could be wrong must also be computed.

I have a great suspicion of statistics: I feel they serve the interests of the doctors more than they do the interests of the patients. Statistically, for that matter, the odds are against our developing cancer, but how does that help you if you're the one who does? I listened grimly as the man at St Mary's told one woman who, at 21, was found to carry the breast

cancer gene (or, more precisely, the marker for it) that even if you have this gene, there is still hardly any likelihood of developing cancer before the age of 30 — perhaps not even a 1 per cent chance. I have no reason to believe my sister carried the BRCA1 or 2 gene, although no reason either to presume she didn't, what consolation can it be that she was part of that 1 per cent?

As I say, I have no way of telling

whether such a gene runs through my family and, having watched the programme, no desire now to find out. This is not because I prefer to deny reality and to block some of the more gruesome possibilities from my mind, but because I can't see that it would help. The women in the programme who were found to carry the gene opted for a pre-emptive, or prophylactic, double mastectomy. They would rather be alive without breasts, they said, than dead with them. Well, that must be right. And yet, is that how clear-cut the decision really is? Who's to say that the mastectomy will prevent any cancer starting? All you need is one cell to remain for the cancer to take root, and however scrupulously the surgeon scrapes it all out, it is impossible to remove every cell. Moreover, many women, like one we saw, do not have a full mastectomy; they choose to lose only the breast tissue within and then have reconstruction. The nipple remains, and that is often (I have always been led to believe) where one could expect cancer involvement.

Because these supposedly prophylactic mastectomies are so recent, because there has been no time to chart the progress of the women who have undergone them, there is no way of telling how rosy the future is. They could develop cancer where the scar is, on the sternum, wherever — nothing is proved. And yet these women looked so relieved, having had this ghastly operation. I felt they had been given, or allowed themselves to think they had been given, much more definitely a clean bill of health than could be scientifically possible.

I see, though, that unless women do come forward for genetic testing, no progress will ever be made medically. Professor Ian Fentiman of the Breast Unit at Guy's (and the man I would want to go to if I ever developed breast cancer) says that his hopes are rather on molecular biology, which he sees as helping surgeons to direct lasers to just those cells, either already cancerous or prone to such involvement, and destroy them in isolation. This has to be the way forward.



Nigella Lawson

Breast aspect: detail from Picasso's *Woman in a Chemise*, 1905 (in the Tate Gallery, London)

Arrogance has no place at Today

I HAVE today committed myself to the Save Peter Hobday Campaign and am offering to chain myself to the nearest Radio 4 microphone to halt this latest and most ruthless manifestation of ageism on the airways. We fifty-somethings have to demonstrate solidarity on these occasions. Today Hobday, tomorrow Alistair Cooke. Next I say more!

However, if a sacrifice has to be made on the *Today* team in order to ensure the survival of Mr Hobday, I have my own candidate. Yesterday, my colleague Giles Coren proposed that Anna Ford should give way — a thoroughly ungentlemanly thought, which could only have occurred to a younger man. Those of us who used to tune in regularly to *News at Ten* just to gaze adoringly at that

Magnus Linklater takes up the Save Peter Hobday campaign by proposing to throw John Humphrys overboard

Hawless complexion, to listen to those perfectly modulated tones and the positively heart-stopping way in which she announced, "And finally, the moog who just wouldn't take no for an answer" could never contemplate turning against her now.

No, I believe there is a more suitable target. The time has come for John Humphrys, the Welsh iconoclast and scourge of Michael Heseltine, to make way for an older man. His crimes (apart from his Welshness and his manifest partisanship on the occasion of any rugby international, particularly those against Scotland) are gross arrogance, occasional pomposity and a distinct impression that he has become more important than those he so savagely interrogates. Anyone who inter-



SAVE HOBDDAY

DROP HUMPHRYS

rupts the Chancellor of the Exchequer 34 times in the course of a five-minute interview — an accusation made by Jonathan Aitken and acknowledged with some pride by Mr Humphrys — is confusing the role of the messenger with that of the message. "Poisoning the well of democratic debate," Mr Aitken called it. Hat! That's the least of it.

Rude, abrasive, intolerant, hectoring... just some of the kinder things said about Mr Humphrys. But are these the qualities that gentle listeners to the *Today* programme want to over the maelstrom? And isn't there more than an element of showmanship about the whole performance? Those dialogues with Michael Heseltine at 8.10 in the morning have begun to

degenerate into nothing more than a political soap opera, punctuated with familiar catchphrases like "Oh, come on, Mr Heseltine," "Let's see if I've got this right" and "but... but... but". Entertaining? Well of course, but hardly the epitome of John Birt's famous "mission to explain".

IF RADIO 4 is the gently beating pulse of the British middle class then Mr Humphrys is an overcharged pace-maker, a serious disturbance to the natural rhythm of life. A man who "approves" of the H.L. Menckin dictum that the correct relationship between the media and politicians is that between a dog and a lamp-post has forfeited his right to enter our extended breakfast areas. And a man who claims that "the broadcasting studio is the true political arena of the age" has been in the job too long.

Why, if he were to be allowed anywhere near Sir Nicholas Lyell, he might have the impudence to ask him if he was "personally at fault" over the Matrix Churchill case, or even to suggest that his legal advice to ministers was mistaken. No, Humphrys must go. The integrity of our political life is at stake.

Tomorrow, Joe Joseph says it is time for James Naughtie to go

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Alan Coren



■ The loved ones are not buried in the rockery — but it was all for the best

It is time to come clean. It may go well with the jury. If it does not go well with the jury, it may at least go well with the judge, even if I am unlucky enough to get Judge Alexander Morrison — for, despite sending Freda Cunningham down for 27 months on Monday, he does seem to have the odd caring bone in his body, albeit, in this case, for her victims.

This case was all about bones and bodies. It was about the bones and bodies of the deceased clientele of Freda's Pet Care Cemetery in Weston-on-Trent. Over the years, her undecayed clientele had paid £185 a time to have the bodies of their pets buried in smart wooden coffins with all the trimmings, but when these were subsequently exhumed, not only was there not a trimming to be seen, there was not even a coffin, smart or otherwise. Freda had buried the deceased either in binliners, or in nothing at all, though whether she made this distinction from spasmodic twinges of guilt, or even compassion, was not made clear in court. I rather doubt it, since what was made clear was that Freda was a really nasty piece of work, which is why Judge Morrison felt the time was right for her to make a major career move.

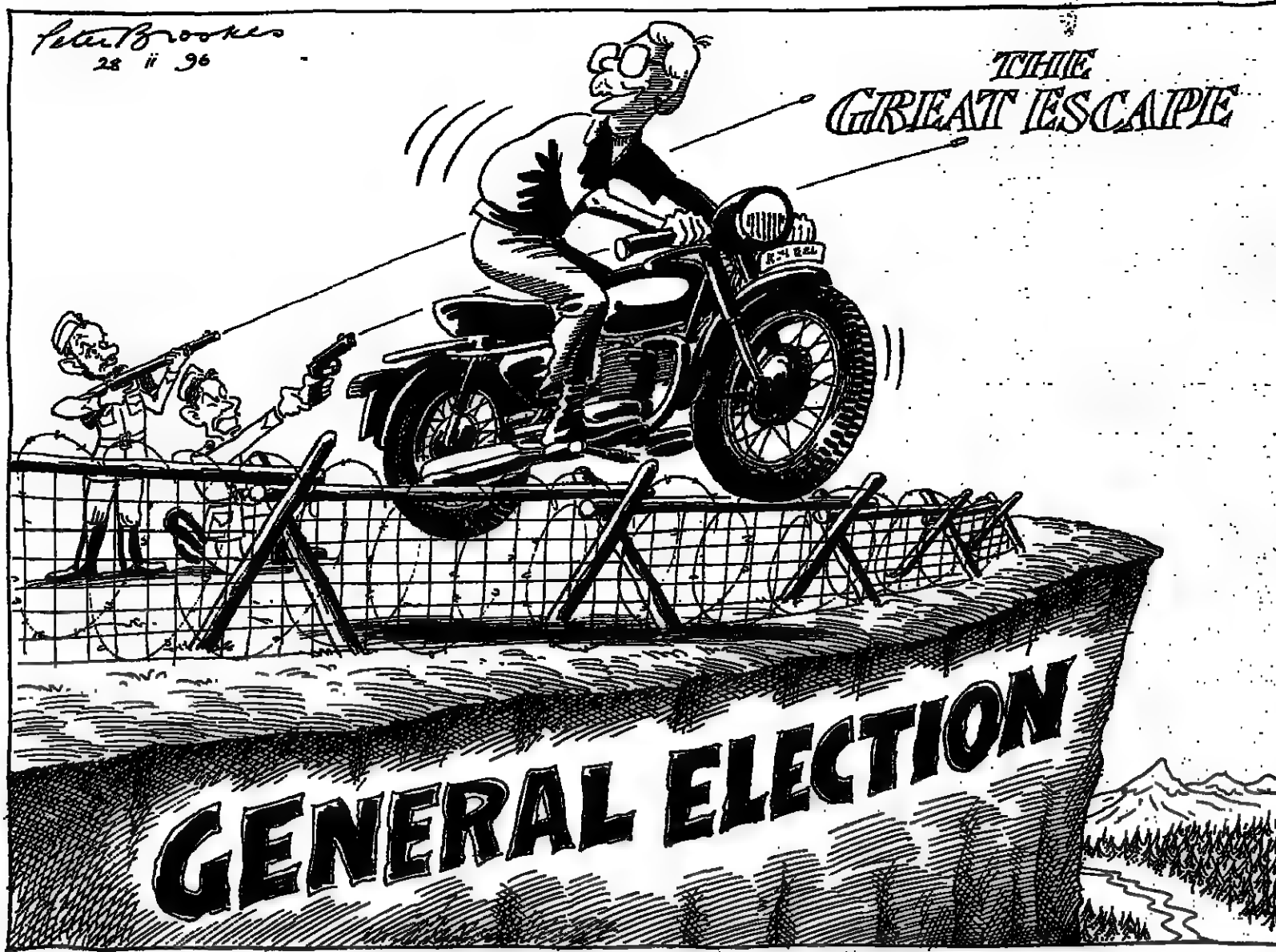
He has my wholehearted support — and not just because I may need him, any day now — for hers was a foul deception, and I sincerely hope that none of my readers will feel that anything but justice has been done. What, however, I do not sincerely hope is that they will feel that justice needs equally to be done when, in consequence of my at last unbending myself today, a panda from the Serious Pet Squad pulls up at my door to haul me before the bench. The justice I want done then is the one that comes tempered with mercy: for while mine was a deception even more duplicit than Freda Cunningham's, foulness, I submit, had no part in it.

I have a pet cemetery, too. It is the rockery at the end of my garden, and during the auld lang syne when my children were small, scarcely a month went by when something wasn't being interred in it. There was a rabbit called Peter, a guinea-pig called Zebadiah, two gerbils called Bill and Ben, a hamster called Sebastian, a tortoise called Morris Doris, three successive frogs (possibly two of them and a toad) called Freddy, and a large number of goldfish known only to God — you do not sprinkle names on a pondful of goldfish unless you can be pretty sure which is which. And, since you ask, uncertainty was also why the tortoise was called Morris Doris, since we couldn't find anything on it — or, when held up to the light, in it — to allow us to form a conclusion.

And all these beloved little chums were, when their time came, lowered into the rockery with obsequies of which a clog-popped emperor would have been proud. With, I have to say, the exception of Morris Doris, because it was impossible to tell whether or not his/her time had come, he/she being no more easy of interpretation in death than in life: whether what was inside his/her shell was alive we could not say, but as it had remained inside him/her for three weeks, we decided merely to put Morris Doris on the rockery to see what happened. What happened was that after a further month, he/she vanished, though whether own steam was involved or some more sinister agency, we never learnt.

But, and here is the nub, all the rest have vanished, too, though my children have grown up believing their dear ones to be snug in tissue-lined shoebox, biscuit-tin, or, in the case of Sid the new, fat-packet, they are deceived. Because after we had interred every one of them, I would covertly dig them up again, and re-dispose of them elsewhere. I see horror darken the jury's eyes; but it is, I swear, for the best. For the earth is skimpier on a rockery, and I did not want some predator, fox, terrier, cat, magpie, to come along, before the fabled baked meats were yet cold, and leave sad scatterings of his and bobs upon the lawn. And if the Day of Judgement turns out to be more at hand than we think, so that the sudden rockery yawnings bring to my family nothing but grave disappointment, well then, I shall just have to throw myself upon their mercy as I do now on yours.

If I'm there, that is, I may be elsewhere, doing 27 months.



In Callaghan's footsteps

A general election in October is the only way to prevent British politics from deteriorating into a subset of Ulster's

He can keep this up for a while, but only just. John Major can drag himself from the saloon. He can adjust his gunbelt, spit in the dust and peer into the noontime heat, wondering who or what spells trouble this time. He can trust his luck. So far he has always drawn first.

But Monday night's majority of one on what was virtually a vote of confidence bodes ill for the coming year. Mr Major is losing an MP a month, by death, by-election or defection. The disloyalty habit is catching. It is near inconceivable — I hedge my bets — that Mr Major can survive to next spring. The question is, does he jump in his own time, or wait to be pushed?

Timing is the essence of politics. Britain offers its prime ministers the boon of the freedom to choose the moment of their re-election. Neither Margaret Thatcher nor Mr Major has lost an election in office. Twice she went to the country early and won handsomely. In 1992, he went the full distance, albeit with a secure majority, and squeaked home against the odds.

Mr Major now has no serviceable parliamentary majority. To carry him through the daily struggle, he must rely on a handful of publicly-hungry dissidents and a regional faction with a sectional agenda of their own. This is desperate stuff. Richard III before Bosworth with a most unreliable Stanley.

The advisers are all for hanging on. That is no surprise. Advisers have jobs and parking spaces to protect. To them, elections are undignified and painful, like road-rage incidents or stories in *The Sun*. They argue that no prime minister picks a fight when he risks being beaten. Mr Major is inclined to agree. Next year something will turn up. There will be a war. There will be a tax cut. There will be a Labour split. The economic confidence graphs may be turning up (they always are). Anyway, things surely cannot get worse.

Oh no? History rarely cures a political ailment, but it can offer first aid. The last minority Government was Labour's of 1974. Elected with a majority of three, it lost its overall majority two years later when John Stonehouse resigned the whip in April 1976. Further by-election losses led to regular Commons defeats, requiring "rectifying" votes of confidence. The Government survived one such vote in March 1977 only by forging the Lib-Lab pact. Humiliating defeats

continued, including one over the Finance Bill, James Callaghan refused to resign because, although he could barely govern, the Liberals kept him on life-support through confidence votes.

That pact collapsed in May 1978 after weekly backstairs squabbles between Treasury ministers and Liberals seeking to veto Labour policies. By autumn that year, an early general election was confidently expected, and the Government's polling performance promptly started to recover — though Mr Callaghan foolishly turned against an early election after reading one adverse result in September. Both Gallup and NOP actually put

Labour in the lead in October and November 1978. Mr Callaghan struggled on. In a foretaste of Mr Major's weekly assignments with Ulster Unionists, Mr Callaghan bribed them with five more Ulster seats. (Mr Major has so far offered only a select committee.) The Scots and Welsh nationalists were given devolution referendums. The Government stumbled into winter.

That winter was one of the most miserable in recent times, for the Government, for Labour and for the country. Almost every substantive act of government was shredded by the Commons, precipitating hair-raising confidence votes. A pact is not a whip. It is a means of survival, not a discipline of government. In the "winter of discontent" public sector workers forced Mr Callaghan to abandon pay restraint. On March 23, 1979, with the devolution referendums lost, the nationalists clicked their fingers and ousted the Cabinet by one vote. By then the Government had lost 10 percentage points at the polls in six months. Nothing did Labour more damage than that last desperate year of clinging to office.

The message of 1978 is that the crises, the compromises, the indignities of trying to hold power when the parliament-ary legitimacy of a government's mandate has expired are electorally counter-productive. Mr Major now faces an awful year. Party managers tick off the horrors to come: May local elections, a frenzied June in the Commons, autumn leadership mutterings, a factional party conference, the Euro-summit, a seething public sector pay round.

Simon Jenkins

With each by-election and each defection, those on the fringes of Mr Major's parliamentary support become more dangerously potent. Tory backbenchers no longer calculate whether or not Mr Major is more likely to win this year or next. Few believe he can win at all. They have to calculate whether their own seats are more winnable this year or next. The message of 1978 is, this year. There are a dozen Alan Howards, Emma Nicholson and Peter Thurnham roaming beyond the reach of the whips, men and women with no hope of office, no admiration for Mr Major and nothing to lose but their seats. That seems to bring a rush of conviction to the head, aided by an intoxicating dose of publicity.

This is the year of the Eurosceptics. Bill Cash and his friends will never again have so much leverage as a party within a party. It would be surprising if they did not exploit their brief power to the full as Maastricht is renegotiated. For the first and probably last times in their careers, such figures as Rupert Allason, Tony Marlow and Richard Shepherd are powers in the land. Even Quentin Davies has tasted glory this week. They offer Mr Major a daily round of threats, bribes and late-night interviews, complete with wives, children and television crews.

Mr Major desperately needs solid allies against such marauders. He has none. He does not even have Mr Callaghan's Scottish and Welsh fair-weather

friends. He has only those "grim spires", the Ulster Unionists. Of these 12, nine owe allegiance to David Trimble, while three are Democratic Unionists round Ian Paisley, fierce opponents of Mr Trimble. As we saw on Monday night, the politics of Britain has become a subset of the politics of Ulster. The ancient quarrel is once more stamping its foot on the earth of Westminster. Be it railways, or healthcare or school reform or European or tax changes, the Unionists will be demanding their say and their way if government business is to be done.

I find it hard to imagine a worse year in which to grant Ulster Unionism such power. If there is any jewel left in Mr Major's crown it is the evenhandedness of his Ulster initiative. That evenhandedness was boldly sustained on Monday night, at risk of catastrophe. Mr Major showed himself a man of principle. When forced to choose between the Trimble faction and the bizarre Hume-Paisley coalition on an arcane point of election procedure — to such had the Scott affair degenerated — he rightly decided against underhand dealing at this stage.

Such fastidiousness is not going to keep Mr Major in office for another 14 months, Mr Trimble is not an old Tory at heart, like his predecessor as Unionist leader, James Molyneux. He shares with his deputy, John Taylor, a distrust of this Government and its devious dealings with Dublin. He sees Tories as usurpers of Northern Ireland's constitution, men who shake hands with IRA gunmen. Mr Trimble is clever and will want every pound of flesh from Mr Major. But he is not an ally. Sooner or later he will reckon that Mr Major's time is up and Mr Blair's has come — Monday suggests it may be sooner. Besides, a Government whose fate turns on Aldergrove airport being free of fog on the night is never secure.

Mr Major will be pushed to the polls before the year is out. His interest lies in taking the initiative. He does best when defying the southsayers and going for broke. He did so with his style of campaigning in 1992 and again in his leadership vote last July. A June election would probably be too soon after the certainly poor local elections. On the other hand, October offers a summer of preparation, an early, juicy Budget and a pre-election conference. Mr Major can bring out his soapbox and enjoy what he does best. He can reassert control over events. All else is chaos.

Owed to The Times money man

by Peter Stothard

At the beginning of each year, the Editor's office at *The Times* receives a note from the archivist suggesting some journalistic anniversaries for celebration in the months ahead. For 1996, these included the quartercentenary of Bernard Levin joining our staff, the 75th birthday of our prototype Business News, *The Times Imperial and Foreign Trade and Engineering Supplement*, and the 25 years at *Times* Newspapers of our redoubtable managing editor, Peter Roberts.

Almost at the end of the archivist's list (between the first female nude in *The Times*, 1971, and our famous report on the death of Napoleon, 1821) there came the suicide of a man with a strange middle name. I looked down at the paper again. I had never heard of him.

Shame on me, as it turns out. Thomas Massie Alsager, who died 150 years ago this year, was not only one of those 19th-century newspaper figures whose versatility puts every one of us, his modern successors, to shame; he was also midwife to John Keats's sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, my own favourite poem, as it happens, as an expression of what seeing something for the first time — the very essence of journalism — is all about.

In 1816 (180 years ago, as it happens, although 180th anniversaries do not figure on our archivist's list) Keats looked for the first time into a translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by George Chapman, the Jacobean poet and dramatist. Chapman's grand barbarism, as has often been recounted, was in shocking contrast to the refined Homeric lines of Alexander Pope, the "smooth little toys" on which Keats and his friends had been brought up.

Chapman's Homer lit a beacon for Romantic poetry. The actual copy of Chapman's Homer, the one which made possible this transforming work for Keats and for English letters, belonged to Alsager of *The Times*.

This great man's primary job was as business manager. If he were to return to us at Wapping today, he would first to the editorial accounts and personnel papers now kept by his fellow anniversary-sharer, Mr Roberts: he would be delighted, I like to think, in the thirty-fold increase in circulation since his day.

But he would also try to borrow some of the space in the newspaper that Mr Levin and Richard Morrison devote to musical opinions and which Anatole Kaletsky and Melvyn Marcus command for economics and the City. He was a writer who would take one look at our seven-section edition on a Saturday, smile when told that its circulation was over 800,000 copies and then ask what we wanted from him: first his City column, his concert review or his help with drumming up some pension-fund advertisements? He was a newspaperman who recognised few bounds.

Alsager was a clothworker by birth. His colleagues used to ask why dealing in canvas, or "floorcloth", as it was known, gave him a right to talk about art. But he did write about art, became a close friend of Charles Lamb, learnt to play almost every instrument in the orchestra and sponsored the first English performance of Beethoven's Mass in D. He also founded *The Times's* City office and invented revolutionary methods of filing copy from home and foreign parts.

Was *The Times* today still probably owe him a great deal. Inasmuch as anyone deserves a 150th year remembrance, Alsager does. Yet the anniversary of his death is the wrong anniversary — and not just because he died by slitting his own throat after accusations that he was over-creative with the accounts.

He had, however, been previously been "made of packthread" — proof against weather, ingratitude, meat-under-done, every weapon of fate, according to a letter written to one of his other enthusiasts, William Wordsworth. But, as D.E. Wickham wrote in a 1981 essay for the Charles Lamb Society, this strong protective "impassibility" deserted him after his disgrace.

Alsager had a miserable end, dying nine days after he had first gashed his wrist and throat. He was 67. It was 30 years since he had provided the 1616 folio of Chapman which, with its "loud and bold" voice, launched Keats into the most creative phase of his life and inspired millions to see what is stunning and new in the world around them.

That was still an era when, but for book collectors, amateurs who stood astride the worlds of finance and art, there could often be no access to texts of books. Alsager's folio, as Robert Gittings describes in his 1968 biography of Keats, was even then too valuable to be risked among the thieves' kitchens of Southwark, and had to be read in an all-night session in the safety of Clerkenwell.

"Much have I travell'd in the Realm of Gold . . .", wrote Keats on his return home, and the rest is literary history. As soon as he had looked into Chapman's Homer, he had a new language, a new confidence to look out into the countryside of his mind.

Then felt I like some Wanderer of the Skies When a new Planet swims into his Ken; Or like stout Corvus when with eagle eyes He stard at the Pacific — and all his Men Look'd at each other with a wild surmise — Silent, upon a Peak in Darien.

Of course, as critics have never ceased to point out, Keats made a mistake in his rapid, bleary-eyed composition after hard Clerkenwell night. The Pacific was not discovered by Cortez but by Balboa. We can be sure that Alsager would have been understanding of this: his was a life in which vital accuracy did sometimes have to be sacrificed to speed, a great life in *Times* journalism that ended 150 years ago.

The author is Editor of *The Times*.

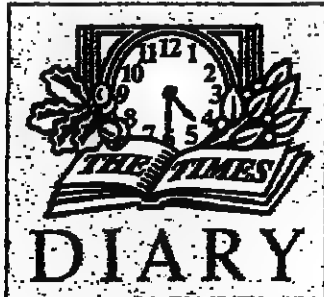
Fire doused

MY REPORT last year about the drunken antics of Trinity undergraduates after the annual matriculation dinner has been seized upon by the authorities. The traditional Great Court race — which made a memorable scene in the film *Chariots of Fire* — has been cancelled.

For years, drunken freshers at the beginning of the academic year have careered round Trinity Great Court at midnight fuelled by a five-course dinner with the dean (accompanied by appropriate liquid refreshment).

No longer. Last autumn's casualties were so numerous, with a handful taken to hospital — including one poor chap with a severed artery — that the college authorities plan to water down the event and offer a daytime alternative.

The race — an attempt to run around the court in 24 chimes of the Trinity and St John's clocks — was first attempted in the 1890s by Sir Walter Morley-Fletcher. Lord Burghley completed the course in 1927 with a chime-and-a-half to spare, but the Trinity librarian debunks the *Chariots of Fire* myth. "I am 99 per cent sure that Harold Abrahams didn't race



Burghley as is often related. There is no documentation to support this.

The changes have yet to be announced by the college, but students point out that the authorities will have problems. "If there's one way to get drunken students running round the court in the middle of the night," said one, "it is to try to ban us from doing it."

Stressed out

I HOPE that Virginia Bottomley likes motorway bridges. In her capacity as the nation's cultural monitor, the Heritage Secretary, along with English Heritage, is apparently proposing to preserve

a selection of pre-stressed concrete monsters for a grateful posterity. She will announce tomorrow a list of postwar buildings that she and her experts believe should be listed as of historical importance.

A 1960s bridge over the A1 near Newark and a footbridge over the A2 near Darford in Kent merit Grade II listing. Only two structures have been put up for Grade I listing — both concrete bridges. Architects point out that one of them, the Severn Bridge, has been half-closed for most of its life. "I



Bridge too far?

thought the whole idea behind the Severn Bridge was that it never worked," said one.

Letters, pray?

DAME BARBARA CARTLAND has lost some of her pink glow with the news that her secretary of more than 22 years is to leave her service. Hazel Clarke has decided she wants to retire at the same time as her husband, and the 94-year-old queen of romantic fiction is distraught.

"It's ghastly, she had to choose between me and her husband and of course she had to be with her husband, but I'm absolutely broken-hearted. Somebody else is being trained up but you can't replace that sort of experience," says the great Dame, adding plangent-ly: "She's my brain."

Clarke explains that letter-writing will be foremost among the new girl's tasks. "Mostly the difficulty is remembering names. She receives 30,000 letters a year, all of which receive a reply."

● Dame Muriel Spark, author of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, admits to an eccentric writing process. In BBC's *Bookmark*, she admits that she cannot bear people touching her pens. "I always use these black biro pens," she reveals. "I get a new set for every



Channel 4's girls playing just plain silly

book. If someone touches one of these pens . . . I throw that out of the window. Nobody is allowed to touch my pens. I lock them up."

Playgirls

THE TRENDY suits at Channel 4 are sharpening their knives in anticipation of blood. After a string of on-screen quips and stunts that have infuriated his bosses, Chris Evans, the ginger-crowned broadcaster, is to receive a vicious character assassination on another Channel 4 programme.

A sketch on his TFI Friday show, in which a death certificate was handed out for Channel 4's controversial *Girlie Show*, has sent the station's hierarchy into

orbit. Now the anarchic presenters of *The Girlie Show* are to be avenged by nominating him for a most unpleasant weekly sobriquet. When the supermodel Naomi Campbell received this juvenile treatment, she was reported to be so incensed she was considering suing. Sting and the orange-skinned magician David Copperfield have also been featured.

● A legal firm in Leeds, formerly known as Godlove Pearlman, insists it is not overstating its relationship with the Almighty after changing its name to *Godloves Solicitors*.

P.H.S



TALKS AND TERRORISTS

The IRA should not have a veto on progress

Hurried telephone calls and late-night negotiations have paved the way for today's summit between the British and Irish Prime Ministers. Last November a similar spasm of high-intensity diplomacy apparently saved the peace process but, sadly, it only delayed the republicans' return to violence. High hopes are invested in today's talks. Agreement across the Irish Sea is welcome. John Major and the Taoiseach, John Bruton, have worked strenuously to bring peace closer. But the fundamental reality is that whatever Sinn Féin's words, the IRA has shown by its actions that Irish republicans are happy bombing than talking.

Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féin's spokesman, has held out the prospect of another IRA ceasefire if a date can be set without preconditions, for all-party talks on Ulster's future. The two Governments, understandably anxious to stop the killing, have swallowed hard and tried to find a mechanism which will allow them to set a date for talks and undermine the republicans' own justification for the IRA's murderous campaign. Mr Major and Mr Bruton have been flexible and ingenious in trying to clear a path to talks but doubts remain that their efforts will see the republicans permanently abandon the gun.

The eagerness of the two Governments to provide a date for talks which Mr McGuinness can pencil into the diaries of his allies on the IRA army council may well encourage inflexible elements within republican ranks. They could think that a well-timed bomb in London had done more to push Mr Major in their direction than months of patient petitioning of civil servants. Hardliners would certainly be inclined to argue that any future obstacles to securing republican ends were better blown out of the way than inched around. A ceasefire bought by fortifying the IRA's belief in violence would be a fragile thing.

There is no guarantee that the scheme apparently favoured by the two Govern-

ments will even deliver another ceasefire. Sinn Féin has declared itself implacably opposed to elections before talks. The two Governments propose intensive discussions on the form of elections to a peace convention but agree that elections must precede talks. Although London and Dublin have tried to accommodate Sinn Féin's demands for rapid movement to talks they have to proceed by an electoral road in order to address the concerns of Northern Ireland's Unionist majority. The insistence on elections could be construed by Sinn Féin, if it wished, as an unacceptable precondition. There are many within republican ranks only too anxious to advance with the Armalite and bypass the ballot box.

Intelligence reports suggest the IRA is prepared to continue its campaign for at least another year. It is believed that it wants to wait until after the elections which are due in the U.S., the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. Irish republicans believe those elections will deliver governments more inclined to talk on their terms. If the IRA has determined on that course, and much operational evidence suggests that it has, then its leaders will find reasons to reject the current overture. Even if some elements within Sinn Féin see merit in a ceasefire, they would not press for one in the face of opposition from significant sections of the republican movement. Republicans would rather risk the wrath of the rest of the world than see themselves split.

But if a proper realism about republican motives is maintained there are, still, grounds for optimism. Both Governments and all the constitutional parties in Ulster now accept the validity of elections to a body which will allow them to thrash out the Province's future. The success of such a convention should not depend on securing republican approval. Ulster's democrats should show they can continue to work together. The men of violence should not have a veto on progress.

TRICKS OR TREATIES

Parliament should give consent to international agreements

After Monday's gloomy proceedings in the House of Commons, the House of Lords has a chance to redress the balance with a Bill that speaks out for parliamentary sovereignty. The 'Treaties (Parliamentary Approval) Bill', to be introduced by Lord Lester of Herne Hill, has its second reading today. Arcane and little-noticed it may be, but this Bill has the power to shrink the democratic deficit and bring some much-needed parliamentary scrutiny to the executive's conduct of foreign policy.

Along among European countries, Britain's Parliament has no right to approve the treaties which are entered into by the Government under the Crown Prerogative. France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands and Portugal all expect their parliaments to consent to important treaties before they are ratified — as does America. Ireland comes closest to the British position, but even there, the 'Dail' must at least be consulted.

Yet treaties are no longer remote agreements between governments; increasingly they touch the lives of citizens. The Maastricht treaty is the most recent example. But the ratification in 1976 of the UN International Covenant on Human Rights, for instance, caused heated discussion in Cabinet because they would prevent a Labour Government from ever abolishing private schools. Yet Parliament was not given an opportunity formally to ratify them. Nor could it pass judgment upon the European Convention on Human Rights, even though Britain's signature transferred legal powers from Westminster to Strasbourg.

The current position is typically British. A convention exists, drawn up in 1924 by Ar-

thur Ponsonby, a junior Foreign Office minister in Ramsay MacDonald's administration. His intention was to ensure parliamentary discussion of important treaties, but the convention has become so diluted that treaties are merely placed before Parliament for 21 sitting days before ratification. No explanation of the purpose or consequences of any treaty accompanies it, and while it is open to members to try to gain parliamentary time for a debate, there is no guarantee that they will succeed, or that the Government will pay any heed. Moreover, the convention is not even always observed: in a recent written answer, Lord Chesham said that ministers "do not consider themselves bound by a statement made over 70 years ago by a member of an administration of a different political persuasion".

Lord Lester's Bill is deliberately minimalist in impact. It would apply only to treaties subject to ratification, so excluding most bilateral agreements. The Government would be obliged to lay before Parliament each treaty along with an explanatory note about the treaty's purpose, the reason for ratification and the likely costs and benefits to the UK. If the treaty were likely to affect existing laws or private rights, or cost the country money, or cede any territory, Parliament would have to approve it actively. Otherwise, the approval would be "laid" under the current Ponsonby procedures.

The only objections that the Foreign Office could produce to this Bill are couched in perfect Mandarin: that nothing needed to change, and that it would take up too much parliamentary time. Their Lordships should produce the appropriate response to such blather, and pass the Bill forthwith.

BIG BROTHER FIDEL

Europe should understand why Cuba is still a pariah regime

Much remains murky in the bizarre shooting down of the two planes owned by the Miami Cuban exile organisation Brothers to the Rescue. The exiles' own mission was undoubtedly provocative: dropping leaflets on Cuban beaches denouncing President Castro was hardly part of a humanitarian search for Cuban boat people. But the tired old tyrant's response was far more provocative. He appears to have staged the incident to cause maximum political confusion in the United States. In the short term he has succeeded. But the shots that brought down the four pilots have also shot down any pretence that he has changed or that Cuba has liberalised.

There are two contradictory theories about Señor Castro's action. One is that with the easing of sanctions and a reviving economy, Cuba's hardliners, who are against further concessions to private enterprise, felt strong enough to ignore American opinion. The second, more probable, explanation is that Cubans still live wretchedly and he has tried the dictator's trick of finding a foreign scapegoat. By provoking renewed sanctions, he can portray Cubans as victims and call for further sacrifices.

Either way, Cuba's bluff has been called. President Clinton, mindful of the potential for electoral damage in Florida should he appear soft on Cuba, has moved quickly to denounce Señor Castro at the United Nations. His ban on charter flights to Cuba

will have little real effect on the communist Government; but it will cut Havana off from direct contact with the exiles who were sending back vital dollar remittances via passenger's returning to Cuba each week. These measures will not satisfy the Miami exiles, whose hatred of the Castro regime is as fierce as ever and who are now calling over the airwaves for his bloody overthrow. But Mr Clinton has shown the rest of America that he is not soft on Cuban communism.

More importantly, the incident may open the eyes of Europeans to the nature of the Castro regime. Europe has never joined the American trade embargo, or fully understood America's emotional antipathy to Señor Castro. But even while continuing to trade with Cuba, Europeans have trod carefully in America's backyard. Recently, however, under the impression that President Castro is in trouble and Cuba on the brink of change, the Europeans have poured in investment, responded to Havana's overtures and even voted, in the European Parliament last month, to start talks on a co-operation agreement. All this was conditional on steps to political pluralism. They were brutally disillusioned last Saturday when, Señor Castro cancelled a promised conference on the Cuban opposition and arrested the participants. Europe was shocked; but after this week's murders in the Caribbean, it should understand why Washington still sees Cuba as a pariah.

Parliament and political secrecy

From the Director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information

Sir, As the Scott vote shows, when Parliament decides — even on an issue as fundamental as whether it has itself been deceived — political considerations dominate all others. The merits of the issue are overwhelmed by the need to prevent ministerial resignations, deprive the opposition of advantage or avoid an early election. This may do for other matters: it cannot be an acceptable basis for deciding when the public should be told the truth.

The case for a freedom of information Act (letters, February 17, 21) is not that it will finally abolish secrecy — even the best law could not do that. But it will take the last word on disclosure away from ministers, and away from a parliamentary majority that regardless of the party involved, may always be tempted to put up with secrecy rather than cause serious embarrassment to its own side.

As William Waldegrave wrote of the House of Commons in his 1978 book *The Binding of Leviathan*, the majority, once obtained, can be whipped into line on virtually any measure (except occasionally great issues of principle or issues which affect MPs personally, like their pay) by its Prime Ministerial ringmaster who holds the whip of a dissolution over it, and dangles fat bunches of patronage carrots under its nose.

Yours sincerely,
MAURICE FRANKEL
Director,
The Campaign for Freedom of Information,
88 Old Street, EC1,
February 27.

Prisons Ombudsman

From the Chairman of the Association of Members of Boards of Visitors

Sir, We view with great concern the reported attempt by the Prison Service to limit the powers of investigation of the Prisons Ombudsman (report, February 26, early editions).

This country has a good record of openness in the administration of its prisons, which has been in existence in one form or another for several centuries. The mere existence of boards of visitors as independent individuals, with the power to enter any part of a prison at any time, day or night, and the authority to report what is seen, is part of the openness that is essential in the fair running of closed establishments.

The ombudsman was set up to investigate complaints by prisoners. His office has an excellent, although short, record of investigating complex complaints, and responding to them with discretion, particularly those beyond the resources of unpaid volunteer members of boards of visitors.

The reported proposal to limit the powers of Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Woodhead appears to be because the Minister and the Civil Service do not like their mistakes to be highlighted. It is likely that the excuse will be made that some of the decisions made by the Home Office are too confidential to let the Ombudsman have access to the details. However, when the Home Secretary cannot trust an admiral with the comparatively trivial secrets of criminals, we know that he is going too far.

Yours sincerely,
CLIFFORD MICKLEBURGH,
Chairman, AMBoV,
Tommy All Alone, Keycol Hill,
Newington, Sittingbourne, Kent,
February 26.

From the Chairman of the British and Irish Ombudsman Association

Sir, We are concerned to read reports that the Prisons Ombudsman, Sir Peter Woodhead, may have to resign as a result of what he regards as a curtailment of his terms of reference by the Home Office.

Sir Peter has not yet applied for membership of our association, apparently because the terms of his appointment do not fully meet our requirement of independence; but it is our hope that these terms will be developed by the Home Office in such a way that in due course he can satisfy our criteria for membership.

We are therefore concerned that the reverse appears to be happening and that the limited independence which the Prisons Ombudsman enjoys may now be subject to further curtailment. If the title "ombudsman" is used, the role should carry with it the independence which the name implies.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BARNES, Chairman,
British and Irish Ombudsman Association,
21 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1,
February 26.

Mothering Sunday

From Miss V. I. Fisher

Sir, I can confirm Mrs Barnard's recollection (letter, February 22) that Sunday was the traditional Mothering Sunday flowers.

I grew up between the wars and children, then, always gave their mothers bunches of violets. At the special Sunday service mothers proudly wore their pinned in their coat lapels.

Yours faithfully,
VERE FISHER,
Trevis Mill,
Luscombe, Nr. Collington, Cornwall,
February 22.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-752 5000

'Sea Empress': time to pay up, own up and clear up

From Professor C. M. Perrins and others

Sir, The tragic mismanagement of the *Sea Empress* disaster in Milford Haven provides clear evidence that the oil industry has failed to learn the lessons of the *Braer* disaster in Shetland three years ago and has not implemented the recommendations of the Donaldson report that followed it.

The Government should ensure that it now does so. It needs to insist that the oil companies, tanker operators and port authorities have adequate emergency procedures in place to assist and rescue damaged vessels and contain spillages when they occur. These need to be planned and agreed with the local communities whose environment and livelihood will be affected by dangerous practices, inadequate provision and incompetent crisis management.

The *Sea Empress* tragedy also raises strategic questions. Is it better to disperse the spill (spreading the impact on marine communities) than to concentrate it? When is the use of oil dispersants and detergents (with inevitable toxic effects) really justified? Would it not be sensible for the Government to establish an effective rapid-reaction team whose job it was to fly immediately to any such incident and take control, unconstrained by the financial benefits of salvage contracts or by local political considerations?

Should ports — especially those close to areas of outstanding natural beauty and great conservation importance — really be allowed to welcome single-hulled tankers, registered under flags of convenience, whatever

the short-term financial advantages? Reports suggest that the amount of oil spilled by the *Sea Empress* was around twice that spilled by the *Exxon Valdez* in Alaska in 1989. We do not yet know the scale of the disaster to animal communities above and below water and to human communities in Dyfed and beyond. It is likely to be immense.

While the cleaning up of the beaches is one important priority, the bulk of the damage will occur under water. This is not as visible as the immediate impact on seabirds and mammals, but may have greater and more enduring effects on plants, animals and people. Only a fully independent inquiry which considers the management of tanker operations and establishes an effective strategy for coping with emergencies would be an appropriate response.

Yours etc,
CHRISTOPHER PERRINS
(Department of Zoology,
University of Oxford),
T. R. BIRKHEAD
(Department of Zoology,
University of Sheffield),
T. CLUTTON-BROCK
(Department of Zoology,
University of Cambridge),
c/o Edward Grey Institute,
South Parks Road, Oxford,
February 26.

From Sir William Lithgow, FRINA

Sir, Nature is rather better than the oil industry at restoring order after a spill. In May 1993 I found nothing but the hulk of the *Braer* to indicate the awfulness of a shipwreck in Shetland which had earlier that year polluted

the cliffs and ruined fisheries and fish farms; but it is naive to suppose that the only victims of a spill are those physically contaminated.

You report (Business, February 24) the assertion by the *Sea Empress*'s Norwegian insurers, Skuld, that in the light of their Shetland experience they may hold back compensation. This is grossly offensive to those of us who have suffered huge financial loss. Skuld and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (the latter run like a charity on behalf of the oil industry), ignored expert advice warning about £6 million on feeding salmon that had to be destroyed a year after the *Braer* disaster. Currently HMG, Shetland council and victims are having to sue these people whilst Skuld belatedly attempts to limit its liability.

The Government has weakly advised it will sit (suspend) its action, leaving Shetland and my company and others to tackle groundbreaking legal issues. The situation, though better than after earlier disasters, is a shambles, with bureaucracies floundering years behind developments.

The Welsh will find to their cost that inquiries will not address the vital issue of fault, as the Government recognised when they unsuccessfully pressed IOPCF to take punitive action in respect of *Braer*. It is high time the oil industry paid and paid promptly for the true cost of its pollution.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM LITHGOW
(Director), Landcatch Ltd.
Ormsay,
PO Box 7, Lochgilphead, Argyll,
February 27.

Anglo-Irish history

From Mr Peter Smith

Sir, For a better understanding of today's Northern Ireland, Mr Andrew Simpson (letter, February 22) invites us to consider a parallel in which a Britain occupied for centuries by Irish imperialists is finally returned to home rule except for Lancashire, which the majority of its population being 'Irish' remains part of a Greater Ireland.

The British response is continued resistance ('bombs and all') until such time as Lancashire is handed back. Mr Simpson approves of this response; by inference, the Irish are under 'a moral obligation' to return Lancashire to the British.

Never mind (to pursue his scenario) that the majority of Lancastrians and their forebears have been citizens of Ireland for several centuries past; never mind that this majority clearly wants to retain that citizenship; never mind that the elected leaders of Britain seek the return of Lancashire only if most Lancastrians so desire it.

Above all, never mind that 'our British response... (bombs and all)' is the response of a tiny group with some very mixed motives indeed and repudiated by the vast majority of the

people of Britain, pro-British Lancastrians included.
Mr Simpson, presumably a democrat, should ask himself how his simplistic arguments contribute to the task of finding a democratic solution in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,
PETER SMITH,
30 Oakcroft Road, SE13,
February 22.

From Mr Ken Stevens

Sir, Mr Andrew Simpson ingeniously tries to apply present-day conventions to historical events by implying that British occupancy of Ireland from the 12th century was somehow illegal. By his reasoning, large tracts of the globe (including, for example, the United States) are being occupied illegally by imperialists of European ancestry.

Hopefully, however, Mr Simpson will accept that the rights of tenure of their current generations have been established by the passing of several centuries — as is the case with the descendants of the original British immigrants in Ireland.

In former times, forcible acquisition of territory was regarded as legitimate. This is no longer so in a civilised society, whether by direct military means or indirectly by terrorist action.

Yours sincerely,
KEN STEVENS,
14 China Farm Lane,
West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside,
February 22.

Many thanks

From Ms Adrienne Capron-Tee

Sir, Perhaps those letter writers (February 24 etc) criticising computer thank-you letters should show a bit of old-fashioned courtesy themselves by receiving them with pleasure instead of criticism. They might receive more! Manners are taught as much by example as by the telling.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIENNE CAPRON-TEE,
6 Balmoral Close, Evesham,
Hereford and Worcestershire.

Club resignations

From Mr D. L. Morgan

Sir, May I perhaps close the saga of the Oxford and Cambridge University Club and women with a correction.

You today report, as you have done on previous occasions, that 69 heads of Oxford and Cambridge colleges left the club last year. This is not accurate: they did indeed write a letter protesting at the exclusion of women from membership, and stating that those of them who were members would resign, but only about half of them were members. The other half who were not members were not even in a position to resign.

Yours faithfully,
D. L. MORGAN
(Committee member),
United Oxford & Cambridge University Club,
71 Pall Mall, SW1,
February 23.

By invitation only

From Mr Peter Hawkins

Sir, You recently announced the occasion of the annual ladies' dinner of the Parish Clerks' Company Court and Social, February 21. As in Eye, and in very many other parishes, we have a female town (parish) clerk. It made me wonder whether 'ladies' dinner' is quite the right way to describe such an event or, heaven forbid, is the membership of the Parish Clerks' Company totally male?

Yours faithfully,
PETER HAWKINS,
Moat House,
20 Church Street, Eye, Suffolk.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-752 5046.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 27: The Queen held an Investiture at Buckingham Palace this morning.

The Rt Hon John Major MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an audience of Her Majesty this evening.

The Lady Susan Hedley has succeeded the Hon Mary Morrison as Lady in Waiting to the Queen.

February 27: The Princess Royal, President, Royal Agricultural Society of England, this morning attended a Council Meeting and Annual Lecture at the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1 Great George Street, London SW1.

Her Royal Highness, President, the Rural Housing Trust, this evening attended the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Annual Dinner at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London W1.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 27: The Prince of Wales

this morning visited the Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane. His Royal Highness later attended a Reception for staff and students of the University.

The Prince of Wales this afternoon arrived at Royal Air Force Lyneham from Morocco.

Mr Stephen Lamport, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Tabor and Miss Sandra Henney were in attendance.

YORK HOUSE
ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 27: The Duke of Kent, President, attended dinner, the Cavalry and Guards Club, Piccadilly, London W1.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
February 27: Princess Alexandra, Vice-Patron, this evening attended a Reception to mark the 140th Anniversary of the Young Women's Christian Association of Great Britain at St James's Palace, London SW1.

Royal engagements

The Queen will attend the Gulf War memorial service in St Paul's Cathedral at 10.55. The Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal will also attend.

The Prince of Wales, as Chairman of the Royal Collection Trust, will attend a preview of the Leonardo da Vinci Exhibition at The Queen's Gallery at 6.45 and will visit the swampanyan Temple, Newquay, at 8.05.

The Duke of York, as Colonel-in-Chief of The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales), will attend a service to dedicate a memorial to the British Overseas Trust in the Gulf War, in St Paul's Cathedral at 10.55, and will attend an Anglo-Argentine Society dinner at the Naval and Military Club, Piccadilly, at 7.30.

The Princess Royal, as President, of the Patron, Crime Concern, will launch Hackney Sales Cides project at Malvern Arch, Stamford Hill Estate, at 3.00, at Hackney Community College, Caledonia Road, at 3.30, at Sloane House, Frumpton Park Estate at 3.55, and at the Town Hall, Mare Street, at 4.30. Later, as Patron of the Butler Trust, she will attend the leap year dinner and ball at the Banqueting Hall, Whitehall Place, London SW1, at 8.00.

Princess Alexandra will open the Western Community Hospital for the Southampton Community Health Services NHS Trust at Walnut Grove, Millbrook, Southampton, at noon, will open the new veterinary centre of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals at 40/40 Mount Pleasant Road, Northam, at 2.00; and will visit the Home of Comfort for Invalids at 17 Victoria Grove, Southsea, at 3.00.

The Duke of Kent, as Vice-Chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board, will open the international passenger terminal at Ashford, Kent, at 11.30.

Luncheons

Insurance Institute of London
The Lord Mayor, accompanied by Mr Sheriff Kenneth Ayres, was the guest of honour at a luncheon given by the Insurance Institute of London yesterday at the Mansion House. Mr Hamish Ritchie, president of the Institute, presided and Mr Howard Davies, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, was the principal speaker.

Newspaper Society
Mr Geoffrey Copeman, President of the Newspaper Society, was the guest of honour at a luncheon held yesterday at Bloomsbury House, London WC1, in honour of Mr Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade. Representatives of provincial newspapers were present.

University news
Oxford
New College
The college has elected to Fellowship as follows:
From October 1, 1996:
Dennis Cecil Feeney, DPhil (BA, Auckland), Official Fellow in Classical Languages and Literature.
Anthony John Butler, MA (Dip Criminology, Camb), Professorial Fellow, Director of Careers Service.
Mark Donald Loney (BSc, Edin), Christopher Cox Junior Fellow.

The University exists to promote excellence in education and research.

Birthdays today
Mr Peter Allis, golfer and broadcaster, 65; Mr Philip Ballinacree, Baillif of Jersey, 50; Sir Peter Baillif, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 71; Miss Stephanie Beaumont, actress, 47; Mr Alfred Burke, actor, 78; Mr John Carson, actor, 64; Field Marshal Sir James Cassels, 89; Dr Jonathan Clark, historian, 45; Mr Robin Cook, MP, 50; Vincent Dillmore, 64; Mr Oliver Everett, librarian, Windsor Castle, 53; Major-General E. F. Foxton, 82; Mr Tristan Gard-Jones, MP, 55; Mrs H.M. Grundy, QC, 60; Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan, film producer, 92; Admiral Sir Peter Herbert, 67; Major-General M.F. Hobbs, director, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, 59; Professor J.M. Irvine, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Aberdeen University, 57; Professor Thomas Kempner, professor of business studies, 60; Mr Barry McGuigan, boxer, 35; Mr Coady Makoloni, musician, 79; Mr Martin Marfion, former Headmaster, Canford School, Dorset, 64; Mr Brian Moore, sports commentator, 64; the Earl of Onslow, 58; Mr Robin Phillips, actor and director, 54; Dr Peter Southern, Headmaster, Bancroft's School, Woodford Green, 49; Mr Peter Stothard, Editor, *The Times*, 45; Sir John Swire, honorary president, John Swire and Sons, 67; Sir Brian Urquhart, former Assistant Secretary-General, UN, 71; Vice-Ambassador, Sir James Muir-Saunders, Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, 60; Mr John Wilson, racehorse trainer, 40.

Receptions
HM Government
Mr Richard Page, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Small Business, Industry and Energy, was the host at a reception given by Her Majesty's Government yesterday at the State House to mark the eleventh session of the Assembly of the International Mobile Satellite Organization.

British Safety Council
Lord Graham of Edmonton was the host at a reception held yesterday at the House of Lords for the British Safety Council's Diploma in Safety Management and Faculty of Risk Management awards.

Thomas More Picture Trust
Mrs Lesley Lewis, Chairman of the Thomas More Picture Trust, Mrs Nancy Catpole, Chairman of the Governors of the British Federation of Women Graduates Charitable Foundation, and Mr David Le Lay, Chairman of the Chelsea Society, were the guests at a reception held yesterday at Chelsea Old Town Hall for the unveiling of the restored group portrait, after Holbein, of Sir Thomas More and family.

Dr Derek Richter
A meeting to commemorate the life and work of the late Dr Derek Richter, PhD, FRCPsych (Hon), will be held at the Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, W1, on Saturday, March 2, at 2 pm. Former colleagues and friends are cordially invited to attend.

Deaths
BANKS-SIMPSON - Lt Col Ronald Stewart and his wife, Mrs Joan, died of cancer on 26th February 1996 at their home, 10, St. James's Place, London SW1A. A funeral service will be held at 11.30 am on 1st March at St. James's Church, London SW1A. The family will receive friends at home from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on 1st March.

BELL - On 23rd February 1996, at his home, 10, St. James's Place, London SW1A, died of cancer. A funeral service will be held at 11.30 am on 1st March at St. James's Church, London SW1A. The family will receive friends at home from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on 1st March.

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The night sky in March

By MICHAEL J. HENDRIE
ASTRONOMY CORRESPONDENT

MERCURY reaches superior conjunction on the 28th and then begins the most favourable evening apparition of the year, though it will not become observable until April.

Venus brightens to -4.4 magnitude, not setting until 23h late in the month when it will be in Taurus and just to the south of the Pleiades. Crescent Moon to the south on the 23rd.

Mars is in conjunction with the Sun on the 4th and will then become a morning star, but will not be observable until July.

Jupiter is a -2.2 magnitude object in Sagittarius rising by 02h 30m by the 31st. Crescent Moon to the north on the 14th.

Saturn is a morning star but remains in twilight until June. Uranus is in Capricorn rising by 03h late in the month. At 5.7 magnitude it is just visible to the naked eye in a dark sky, but requires binoculars or a telescope and a star chart showing fainter stars for a firm identification.

Neptune is to the west of Uranus and at 8 magnitude needs optical aid. Moon to the north on the 15th. The Moon: full Moon, 10.59h; last quarter, 12.17h; new Moon, 19.11h; first quarter, 27.02h.

The Earth: the Spring equinox, when the Sun crosses the equator into the north hemisphere, is at 20.03h.

Sunset on the 1st is at 17h 35m and on the 31st at 18h 35m with sunrise at 06h 50m and 05h 35m on the same dates. Astronomical twilight ends at 19h 30m and 20h 30m early and late in the month and begins again at 04h 35m and 03h 40m.

Comet Hale-Bopp, discovered in the November Night Sky news, is still expected to become a naked eye object later this year, and possibly a conspicuous comet with a tail in March and April 1997. Hale-Bopp seems to be a large and active comet which will be bright despite not approaching closely the Earth or Sun.

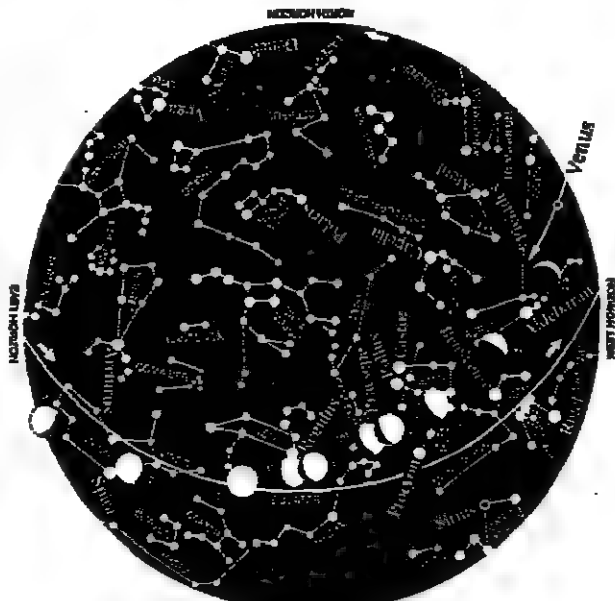
Another comet has been discovered recently in Japan, C/1996 B2 (Hyakutake), which is expected to reach naked eye brightness later this month. Unlike Hale-Bopp, comet Hyakutake will make a relatively close approach to the Earth and later pass quite close to the Sun (24 million km). If this comet becomes bright, it will be for these reasons and not because it is an unusually active object like Hale-Bopp.

In February comet Hyakutake is moving towards the Earth in the southern sky and moving very slowly north through the constellation Libra. This slow movement against the sky makes the orbit difficult to determine accurately, which makes the track across the sky when the comet will be visible to the Earth rather uncertain.

Accuracy will improve with further observations. But the general path through the constellations is unlikely to be far off though because of its fast apparent motion across the sky the comet could be seen several days ahead or behind its currently estimated positions on dates towards the end of the month. The magnitudes are as follows.

The comet could become visible to the naked eye (4th-5th magnitude) about mid-month in Libra and cross the equator into eastern Virgo on the 20th when it could be 3rd magnitude.

By the night of the 22nd/23rd it passes 10 degrees east of Arcurus in Bootes. By the 23rd/24th it is the Earth or Sun (1.35 million km) and Corona Borealis, being 10 degrees



The diagram shows the brighter stars that will be above the horizon in the latitude of London at 23h (11 pm) at the beginning, 23h (10 pm) in the middle, and 21h (9 pm) at the end of the month, local mean time. At places away from the Greenwich meridian the Greenwich times at which the diagram applies are later than the above by one hour for each 15 degrees west of Greenwich and earlier by a like amount if the place be east of Greenwich. Mean Time, known to astronomers as Universal Time and expressed in 24-hour notation, is used in the accompanying notes unless otherwise stated.

the last star in the tail of the Ursa Major (and the Plough) by the 24th/25th. By this time the comet could be 1st magnitude, but perhaps not as easy to see as this.

It then passes (25th/26th) near the brightest star in Ursa Minor and within a few degrees of Polaris (26th/27th) and on into Camelopardalis (27th/28th), now moving less quickly to be in northern Perseus by April 1st perhaps 2nd magnitude.

The March chart shows these constellations and for most of this time the comet will be above the horizon all night. However, it will not be easy to see if there is much moonlight. The moon is at first quarter on the 27th but in March sets late (almost 02h on the 26th/27th). So the best time to see the comet will be in the early hours when it is darkest. The star chart for June (any year) shows how the stars are placed relative to the horizon on April 1st at 03h and would be a good guide to where to look for the comet.

Predictions about comets are fraught with uncertainty and astronomers always have the dilemma of whether to alert readers and risk another damp squib or play safe by saying nothing and risk depriving them of a rare sight in the night sky.

The last naked eye comet to pass close to the Earth was IRAS-Araki-Alton in 1983 May. This passed within 0.03 AU (4.5 million km) compared with 0.10 AU (15 million km) for Hyakutake. It reached 1.5 magnitude and 2.5 degrees across or five times the Moon's diameter, and looked like a small white cloud and its movement against the stars was so fast as to be noticeable with the naked eye in only a few minutes. Hyakutake too will reach almost a degree an hour and could also appear large and diffuse. It may be necessary to sweep over an area near the positions described which are for about midnight. Binoculars should help here to locate and follow the comet should it be fainter than expected or of low surface brightness and to show any detail in the head or tail.

Anniversaries
BIRTHS: Michel de Montaigne, essayist, Périgord, France, 1533; Thomas Newcomen, inventor of the atmospheric steam engine, Dartmouth, England, this day 1663; René Descartes, philosopher and mathematician, La Rochelle, France, 1596; Sir John Tenniel, illustrator and cartoonist, London, 1820; Blondin (Jean-François Gravelle), tightrope walker, St-Omer, France, 1824; Douglas Hogg, 1st Viscount Hailsham, Lord Chancellor 1928-29 and 1935-38, London, 1872; Ben Hecht, novelist and film writer, New York, 1894; Sir Peter Medawar, medical scientist, Nobel laureate 1960, Rio de Janeiro, 1915; Brian Jones, rock guitarist, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, 1942.

DEATHS: Alphonse de Lamartine, poet and statesman, Passy, France, 1869; Henry James, novelist, Rye, 1916; Arnold Dolmetsch, musician, Haslemere, Surrey, 1904; Henry Lef, publisher of *The Spectator*, Lifford, Phoenix, Arizona, 1967.

John Wesley signed the 'deed of declaration' of the Wesleyan faith, 1784. Lady Smith was relieved during the Boer War, 1900. Albert Berry made the first parachute jump from a plane over London, 1910. Forty-two people died when a London Underground train crashed at Moorgate station, 1975.

Lord Gillmore of Thamesfield
The life barony conferred upon Sir David Hugh Gillmore was gazetted by the name, style and titles of Baron Gillmore of Thamesfield, of Putney, in the London Borough of Wandsworth.

Today's events
The Queen's Life Guard mounds at Horse Guards at 11.00.

Birthdays today
Mr Peter Allis, golfer and broadcaster, 65; Mr Philip Ballinacree, Baillif of Jersey, 50; Sir Peter Baillif, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 71; Miss Stephanie Beaumont, actress, 47; Mr Alfred Burke, actor, 78; Mr John Carson, actor, 64; Field Marshal Sir James Cassels, 89; Dr Jonathan Clark, historian, 45; Mr Robin Cook, MP, 50; Vincent Dillmore, 64; Mr Oliver Everett, librarian, Windsor Castle, 53; Major-General E. F. Foxton, 82; Mr Tristan Gard-Jones, MP, 55; Mrs H.M. Grundy, QC, 60; Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan, film producer, 92; Admiral Sir Peter Herbert, 67; Major-General M.F. Hobbs, director, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, 59; Professor J.M. Irvine, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Aberdeen University, 57; Professor Thomas Kempner, professor of business studies, 60; Mr Barry McGuigan, boxer, 35; Mr Coady Makoloni, musician, 79; Mr Martin Marfion, former Headmaster, Canford School, Dorset, 64; Mr Brian Moore, sports commentator, 64; the Earl of Onslow, 58; Mr Robin Phillips, actor and director, 54; Dr Peter Southern, Headmaster, Bancroft's School, Woodford Green, 49; Mr Peter Stothard, Editor, *The Times*, 45; Sir John Swire, honorary president, John Swire and Sons, 67; Sir Brian Urquhart, former Assistant Secretary-General, UN, 71; Vice-Ambassador, Sir James Muir-Saunders, Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, 60; Mr John Wilson, racehorse trainer, 40.

Deaths
BANKS-SIMPSON - Lt Col Ronald Stewart and his wife, Mrs Joan, died of cancer on 26th February 1996 at their home, 10, St. James's Place, London SW1A. A funeral service will be held at 11.30 am on 1st March at St. James's Church, London SW1A. The family will receive friends at home from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm on 1st March.

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Forthcoming marriages

Mr M.L. Bassett
and Miss C.J. Bailey
The engagement is announced between Michael, second son of Mr Bryan Bassett, CBE, and Lady C.J. Bailey, daughter of Mr J.P. Bailey and of Mrs Bailey, of Quakers, Lower Hazel, Bristol.

Mr A.J. Mc. Crawford
and Miss S.H.M. Bidwell
The engagement is announced between Andrew, elder son of Mr and Mrs Ian Crawford, of Blairgowrie, Perthshire, and Sophie, only daughter of Sir Hugh and Lady Bidwell, of The Paragon, Goodnestone, near Canterbury.

Mr J.A. Dakin
and Miss V.M. Hunt
The engagement is announced between Jon, younger son of Mr and Mrs Gerald Dakin, of Ippleham, Devon, and Victoria, daughter of Mr and Mrs John Hunt, of Hatch Beauchamp, Somerset.

Mr J.B. Neume
and Miss L.M. Baker
The engagement is announced between Jonathan Beale, son of Mr Robert Neume, of Selling, Kent, and Mrs John Livingston, of Boscawen, Cornwall, and Lucia Margaret, daughter of Mr (Michael) Baker, of Ruxton, Hampshire, and Mrs Richard Barker, formerly of Winchester, Hampshire, now of Providence, France.

Commander M.C. Sillars, RN
and Miss M.M. Millard Barnes
The engagement is announced between Malcolm Crawford, only son of the late Mr and Mrs Angus Sillars, of Stuckenduff, Shandon, Dumbartonshire, and Amanda Mary, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs John Millard Barnes, of The Craig, Balmuccella, Kirkcubrightshire.

Mr S.M. Foden
and Mrs C.A. Black
The engagement is announced between Stephen, only son of Mr and Mrs M.J. Foden, of Sevenoaks House, Trull, Taunton, Somerset, and Catherine, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Wild, of Bull Farm, Kenley, Shrewsbury.

Mr D.Q. Salmon
and Miss J.M. Stappan
The engagement is announced between Daniel, son of Professor S. and Dr. P.H. Salmon, of Frodham, Cheshire, and Joanna, daughter of Canon and Mrs J.L. Simpson, of Bristol.

Mr R.J. Smith
and Miss W.J.E. Clark
The engagement is announced between Roger, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Roy Smith, of Sevenoaks, Kent, and Wendy, only daughter of Mr G.B. Clark and the late Mrs Diane Clark, of Farnborough, Kent.

Mr P.H.G. Turner
and Miss J.M. Fetherstonhaugh
The engagement is announced between Philip, son of Mr and Mrs P.H.G. Turner, of Gillingham, Suffolk, and Juliet, youngest daughter of Mr C.B.R. Fetherstonhaugh, of Andorra, and Mrs M.S. Cotton, of Bisleigh, Gloucestershire.

Mr N.F. White
and Mrs N.C. Perret
The engagement is announced between Nicholas, elder son of Mr and Mrs Richard White, of Hove, and Naomi, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs John Perret, of Boston.

Mr M.D. Wood
and Miss S.C. Lattin
The engagement is announced between Mark, son of Mr and Mrs Robin Wood, of Honeydew, Johannesburg, and Sandra, daughter of Mr Ian Lattin, of Johannesburg, and Mrs Paula Fox, of Wake Colne, Colchester.

Mr R.H. Grey, of Meopham
The engagement is announced between Roger, eldest son of Mr and Mrs R.H. Grey, of Meopham, Kent, and Mrs M.J. Foden, of Sevenoaks House, Trull, Taunton, Somerset, and Catherine, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Wild, of Bull Farm, Kenley, Shrewsbury.

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Mr M.D. Wood<

OBITUARIES

Pat Smythe, OBE, international showjumper, died from heart disease yesterday aged 67. She was born on November 22, 1928.

In international showjumping, one of the few sports in which men and women come together on level terms, Pat Smythe was the world's most successful woman ever. Lieutenant Colonel Sir Harry Llewellyn, an Olympic gold medal winner, described her as "an all-time great, the best lady rider I have ever seen".

With Prince Hal and Tosca in particular, two difficult and temperamental horses, bought for a song, she had an amazing run of successes. This led to other people sending her their horses to her to jump, including Lord King of Warraby, the Hon Dorothy Paget, the eccentric racehorse owner, and Robert Hanson, master of the Grove and Rufford Hunt and father of Lord Hanson.

But Pat Smythe was not one of today's sponsored sports stars. In order to get into showjumping, pay her horse's keep and show entry fees she worked weekends and in school holidays, milking cows, repairing farm walls and selling vegetables.

She became a household name because, during her 17 years at the top, television seemed besotted by showjumping. At the start of her international career the sport was still largely dominated by the officers of such smart pre-war cavalry schools as Sandhurst, Torquay and Fort Riley. They rode big horses and they rode in uniform. The TV audiences warmed to the fresh young woman in black coat and cap, riding a pony-size horse, yet still able to beat the men on big occasions — even to beat them with ease.

Smythe won grand prix events on her own horses in more countries than any man or woman has done since. She won in the United States, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and Denmark. In Australia, South Africa and South America she won grand prix events on borrowed horses that she had first seen less than a week before. In 1956 she was the first woman to ride in the showjumping at the Olympic Games and the first to win a medal, a bronze. Women had previously been banned by the Olympic authorities on the ground that it was not fair to them to compete against the men. Indeed in her early days Smythe sometimes inadvertently caused embarrassment. "Sorry about this, we were not expecting a woman rider to be as good as you," said Mr Justice Wylie, chairman of the Royal Dublin Horse Show, presenting her with the prize for the show's most successful international rider — the prize was a silver cigar box.

Yet Smythe had neither the strong leg nor strong back thought to be essential for a leading rider at international level. Her gift was rather the rapport she developed with each and every horse. Horses were

treated as friends with whom to co-operate for the best results, and never ever as machines to be booted into the winning slot. Horse and rider blended with a harmony seldom seen in top sport. Together they would saunter into a big arena, always at the walk, and not looking at all like winners. But Smythe seemed to imbue her mounts with her indomitable will to win.

Her favourite was Prince Hal. She saw him finishing last in the Kim Muir Chase at the Cheltenham Gold Cup meeting. It was low at first sight. Closer inspection revealed a bowed tendon. Amazingly in the circumstances, she and her mother reckoned they could get the horse sound and turn him into a showjumper. They paid £300 for him. He won them thousands in return. On the North American jumping circuit, Smythe was to win all five international events at Harrisburg on Prince Hal. The headlines in the local paper ran: "One Girl Beats All the Americans". Smythe repeated the performance on the same horse at the even more competitive Brussels International.

She was brilliant on the big occasions. She won the Gold Buntions of Algiers on Prince Hal, Africa's most coveted showjumping prize. But perhaps the most memorable aspect of this win was the outstandingly high quality of the competition. Smythe beat three men who between them had taken four Olympic gold medals and one world championship.

Prince Hal was at the height of his powers at the time of the 1960 Rome Olympics. Smythe was near to tears when she was picked for the team without him, but the team trainer, Colonel Jack Talbot-Funston, declared that he would not have a thin-skinned broken-down racehorse on his team. A Wealden cavalryman of the old school, his idea of an Olympic horse was one that looked like a pre-war officer's charger. Smythe had the last laugh. Riding Prince Hal at the very next show after the Rome Olympics she beat both the gold and silver medalists in a major event.

There is always danger and sometimes, damage when competing at the highest level on a fiery, difficult horse. On Tosca, Smythe's first international abroad, at Nice, Smythe took a crashing fall. She lay on the ground, motionless and spectators wondered if she was still alive. She did not jump again at that show. But four months later horse and rider took the most important national title of them all, the Leading Showjumper of the Year championship at Wembley. And for two years they were to be the biggest money-winners in British showjumping.

Smythe took four individual European titles. She was the first woman to win the famous international, the Hickstead Derby, riding Robert Hanson's Flanagan. Lord King's Mr Pollard finally won her the Queen Elizabeth Cup, after a string of seconds on other horses. On two of the



four occasions that she won the Royal International Show supreme championship it was on the Hon Dorothy Paget's Scorcin, a horse she was later to drive to a Rallid cart round the Gloucestershire roads near her home.

However, though showjumping was Smythe's career it was one that dominated her life. In her spare time at international shows she would be polishing up her world-class riding skills on conservation work. But higher education was not for her. She announced to the formidable Miss Freda Sykes, who was headmistress of Thornton Heath at the time, that she was quitting after five terms. She wanted to be a showjumper, and she had a sick horse. Finally, that needed nursing. It was necessary for her to earn money to pay for the horse's keep.

At this time Smythe, her mother and her elder brother Ronald were living in a rented house in the Gloucestershire countryside. They grew vegetables in the garden and at weekends Pat would harness up the pony Fido to a cart, drive into Cheltenham and sell the produce to hotels and boarding houses. During the school holidays she worked on a nearby farm. She also learnt to repair the Cotswold stone walls of the area.

Later the family moved to two rooms in Bath. Mrs Smythe gave children riding lessons and got to work, together with her daughter, repairing the stables at Bath

racecourse which had been damaged by wartime bombing.

Their next move was to the country, to Miserden, where they turned their home into a guest-house for 12 students from Cirencester Agricultural College during the term and took in foreign children wishing to learn English in the holidays. This provided them with sufficient income to live and to finance Pat's showjumping. She was then 20. But though the guest-house flourished, Pat's mother died three years later when her car skidded on an icy road.

Despite all her struggles, friends could only remember Smythe being bitter once — the afternoon that her mother died. The bank manager rang to say that he had to call in a debt of £1,500 that had been loaned for the conversion of the house. Always practical, Smythe sold Leona, her most promising international horse at the time, to Swiss friends for £1,500. The guest-house continued, staff being hired to take the place of her mother.

Smythe began to write books and had 11 published by the age of 30. Her children's series, *The Three Jays*, an ongoing story of children, their ponies and their farm animals, was translated into several languages. She published her autobiography *Jumping For Joy*, to be followed by *Jumping Life's Fences*. This dramatically changed her financial position, at least for a time.

She purchased Sudgrove, a fine country house in the Cotswolds with stables and paddocks for her horses, and invited showjumping friends, Sir Harry and Lady Llewellyn, to come and see it. They were appalled at its dilapidated state and the erratic electricity and water supplies, neither of which came from the mains. Smythe nonetheless decided to go ahead. She craved a home of her own after all the years of lettings and leases. When she went to live in Switzerland, Sudgrove continued to be a guest-house for students.

In 1963, aged 35, she married Sam Knechtlin, a Swiss lawyer and businessman. Sir Malcolm Sargent, the conductor, chose the singers for the ceremony and Lord Beaverbrook lent his London flat for the honeymoon. The couple had met 12 years before when he had come to study at the London School of Economics and his horse had come with him for him to ride in the Badminton Horse Trials and been accommodated in his future wife's stables.

For some twenty years Smythe accompanied her husband on business trips all over the world, finding an outlet for her second love, the preservation of rare animals and conservation of the environment. In summer there were visits to the family villa on an island on Lake Lucerne. In winter they would ski from the family chalet at Wengen where Pat kept up with British friends at the Downhill Only Club. Their home was a house of Cotswold-coloured stone which they had built on the sunny side of the Jura mountains. Building work was slow until Smythe hung on the biggest tree in the village an open invitation to supper and a dance. A great evening for the builders and all their friends resulted in the house being finished with astonishing rapidity.

After her husband's death Smythe returned to Sudgrove. She had had a succession of illnesses, many of them developing from bad falls from her very early days of showjumping. She had several leg operations. Both her hips were replaced and at the age of 56 she was found to have a generic heart fault. She also developed crippling osteoporosis.

But Smythe never really retired. She redoubled her efforts on behalf of the World Wildlife Fund, travelling the world on inspections as a member of its international committee. She was involved with a number of conservation groups, and always actively so. Local events such as church fetes always meant much to her.

Long after she had been forced to give up showjumping she remained involved in the sport as an international selector, and sometimes, chief dequipe of British teams abroad. From 1986 to 1989 she was president of the British Showjumping Association. She was appointed OBE in 1986.

She is survived by her two daughters.

THE DUKE OF ATHOLL

George Iain Murray, 10th Duke of Atholl, died of a stroke yesterday aged 64. He was born on July 10, 1931.

THE DUKE OF ATHOLL was Scotland's most perennially eligible bachelor. The laird of Blair Atholl and Chief of the Name of Murray, he sported a private army and was a familiar figure at Caledonian Balls, sometimes as escort to Princess Margaret. He looked every inch a duke, and standing 6ft 3in, he was known in Perth as "wee

lain". He possessed a patrician smile, an impressive and distinctive nose, and a full head of hair. In 1989 an estate worker paid him a rare compliment — "He was a poor sort of creature when he came here. A real Englishman, no beef on him. Now he looks a duke — and acts like one — knows every man on the estate by name".

The succession of the Dukes of Atholl has not been straightforward, owing to several dukes dying unmarried, and many male Murrys failing to produce heirs. Indeed, the

Atholl succession has been a curiously barren one over the centuries, dying out on more than one occasion. Tenth in the line of dukes, Iain Atholl descended from the 3rd Duke but from none of his successors.

The 4th Duke gave birth to the 5th Duke (who died unmarried in 1846) and was, in turn, succeeded by his nephew, the 6th Duke left an only child, the 7th Duke, who had four sons, among them both the 8th Duke (a man of considerable public service, whose wife Katharine, "the Red

Duchess", was childless) and the 9th Duke (who succeeded his brother). He died unmarried in 1957.

It was upon his death that the dukedom reverted to his very distant cousin, Iain, a descendant in the seventh generation of the 3rd Duke, who had died in 1805. Interestingly the 10th Duke is now succeeded by his almost equally distant cousin, John Murray, who lives in South Africa and was born in 1929 (three potential heirs having died since 1957).



manding position on the main route through the central Highlands. The history of the place suffered the traditional difficulties of so many Scottish castles in a variety of turbulent times. It did not assume its present aspect until 1869. Much of the duke's time was spent managing the 120,000-acre estate. In 1991 he attended President and Mrs Reagan at the castle, inaugurating the President as an honorary member of the Keepers of the Quaich.

He was a genial and retiring man, fond of stalking and golf and riding on the estate. He enjoyed nothing more than turning out with his private army, the Atholl Highlanders. (In 1844 Queen Victoria had granted the Atholls the unique privilege of having an army. They were unkindly dubbed "Dad's Army in kilts".) Denied family happiness, he was a zealous attendant at local functions. From time to time he made appearances in the gossip columns, his name linked with some hopeful future duchess. There was even an occasion when he had to fend off the attentions of Lindy St. Clair ("Miss Whiplash"), who sent him a pornographic video of herself in an ill-conceived attempt to lure him. He was trampled by a herd of cows in 1993.

At Blair there is a private graveyard a few minutes' walk from the castle, where his immediate ancestors and his mother are all buried. The 10th Duke will also be interred there.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TICKETS FOR SALE

TICKETS
(Bought & Sold)
England, Wales, Scotland, 5 Nations, 6 Nations, 7 Nations, 8 Nations, 9 Nations, 10 Nations, 11 Nations, 12 Nations, 13 Nations, 14 Nations, 15 Nations, 16 Nations, 17 Nations, 18 Nations, 19 Nations, 20 Nations, 21 Nations, 22 Nations, 23 Nations, 24 Nations, 25 Nations, 26 Nations, 27 Nations, 28 Nations, 29 Nations, 30 Nations, 31 Nations, 32 Nations, 33 Nations, 34 Nations, 35 Nations, 36 Nations, 37 Nations, 38 Nations, 39 Nations, 40 Nations, 41 Nations, 42 Nations, 43 Nations, 44 Nations, 45 Nations, 46 Nations, 47 Nations, 48 Nations, 49 Nations, 50 Nations, 51 Nations, 52 Nations, 53 Nations, 54 Nations, 55 Nations, 56 Nations, 57 Nations, 58 Nations, 59 Nations, 60 Nations, 61 Nations, 62 Nations, 63 Nations, 64 Nations, 65 Nations, 66 Nations, 67 Nations, 68 Nations, 69 Nations, 70 Nations, 71 Nations, 72 Nations, 73 Nations, 74 Nations, 75 Nations, 76 Nations, 77 Nations, 78 Nations, 79 Nations, 80 Nations, 81 Nations, 82 Nations, 83 Nations, 84 Nations, 85 Nations, 86 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Undertaking to bank not breached

Northampton.

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Northampton.


IMG

Mark McCormack's international sports and arts promotion group is looking for a

Hospitality Sales Executive

to join the IMG Hospitality team. All applicants should have proven track record in sales, including experience of cold-calling. Confidence and communication skills are essential and will be a wide range of client contacts to develop and maintain a high level of a high level of organizational ability, and capacity to remain calm under pressure. Good business sense and initiative in creating new and bespoke events will be important for the future development of the role. Preferred candidates will be 20-30 years old. Previous experience of corporate entertaining useful but not essential.

Write with full CV stating current salary/package to: Caroline Ward, Personnel Manager, IMG, 5th Floor, Asia Centre, Hong Kong.

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28 1996

N&P still to settle with chief who left 18 months ago

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT



O'Brien: driving force

NATIONAL & Provincial Building Society will admit next week that it has been unable to reach a settlement with David O'Brien, the chief executive who was deposed 18 months ago.

In a transfer document, to be sent out on Monday to members ahead of their vote on the proposed £1.35 billion acquisition of the society by Abbey National, N&P will say that negotiations with Mr O'Brien have not yet been concluded. At the time of his departure, industry estimates put the size of his compensation payment at up to £600,000.

The document will also outline earlier plans by N&P to merge with the Leeds Permanent Building Society and convert to bank status. Mr

O'Brien had been the driving force behind the proposed merger in 1993. The plans came to nothing and it was said at the time that the Leeds could not come to terms with N&P's management style.

Mr O'Brien left abruptly on September 28, 1994, with no reason being given for his departure. The society said he resigned after being told that the board wanted to replace him with Alastair Lyons, then finance director.

According to the society's annual report, Mr O'Brien received £324,000 in salary and bonuses in the previous year. Given the suddenness of his departure and his two-year contract, speculation at the time was that he would receive the biggest pay-off in society history.

It was Mr Lyons who negotiated the society's agreed acquisition by Abbey, after earlier

rejecting approaches. Mr Lyons had been in talks with his opposite number at the Nationwide, and the two societies had planned to merge and seek a stock market flotation. Abbey's approach forced N&P to evaluate other options. Its transfer document will also list the names of the five banks and building societies with which it held talks before agreeing to the Abbey offer.

Abbey is top of the list, but the other parties named will be the Nationwide, the Woolwich Building Society, Alliance & Leicester Building Society, and Cheltenham & Gloucester which is owned by Lloyds TSB.

An N&P spokesman refused to comment on the transfer document.

He confirmed that the society had not yet reached an agreement with Mr O'Brien "as to

the amount of any payment that may be due to him. If and when this is concluded, if there is anything that we need to say, we will do so. But as yet no agreement has been reached."

After his departure, records at the Building Societies Commission, the industry's watchdog, showed that Mr O'Brien owed the society almost £460,000. He had two mortgages, one for £199,000 and the other for £258,000 and was likely to have been paying a special low rate of interest on part of the loans. BSC records showed that at the start of 1992 he had three mortgages totalling over £1 million.

His departure focused attention on links between N&P and Sherwood Computing, a company chaired by him.

Mr O'Brien could not be contacted last night.

Kvaerner set to launch bid for Trafalgar

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE City expects an 6840 million takeover bid for Trafalgar House after Kvaerner, the Norwegian shipbuilder and engineer, revealed yesterday it had made an approach to the ailing UK engineering and construction giant.

Kvaerner, owner of the Govan shipyard on the Clyde, said that it held talks with Trafalgar, which made losses of £321 million last year, to "explore business possibilities". Trafalgar House, said later that it was expecting to receive formal details of an offer later this week and would consider the merits of the deal at that point.

Trafalgar shares jumped 8 1/2p to 47 1/2p, valuing the company at £722 million. Analysts predicted that Kvaerner would need to pitch a deal at between 50p and 55p-a-share. A 50p bid would value Trafalgar's ordinary shares at £592 million and its 450 million preference shares at £247 million.

Kvaerner has indicated it is unlikely to make a hostile bid as any deal would need the support of Trafalgar House's principal shareholder, Hongkong Land, which holds a 26 per cent stake. Kvaerner could also face difficulties as its own market capitalisation is only around £850 million.

The City has not ruled out a partial offer by Kvaerner for a stake in Trafalgar House as an alternative to a full bid. But Hongkong Land is understood to be willing to sell, in spite of having reaffirmed its long-term commitment to Trafalgar as recently as December. Yesterday Hongkong Land said it would be guided by the board of Trafalgar on the merits of any offer.

Hongkong Land, which is

controlled by the Keswick family, is estimated to have invested around £300 million in Trafalgar House since it first bought into the company at 40p a share in 1992. The company also helped to underwrite two further rights issues at 100p and 60p and any deal is likely to leave the company bearing losses of more than £100 million.

This is Kvaerner's second shot at a UK construction business after it failed in a £360 million takeover bid for Amec late last year. Kvaerner is understood to have cast an eye over Trafalgar when reviewing its strategic options at that time.

Kvaerner still holds a 23 per cent stake in Amec and shares in that company fell back 5p to 95p on market fears that Kvaerner would dump the stake. However, Kvaerner insisted it was not under pressure to dispose of the stake.

Kvaerner's main interests in Trafalgar House are likely to be its engineering and construction subsidiaries, John Brown and Davy Corporation. The company is keen to get a foothold in the UK to provide better access to off-shore construction projects in the North Sea, and to develop a more globally based business capable of competing with its American rivals. The company could also benefit from substantial tax write-offs as a result of Trafalgar's recent heavy losses.

But a successful takeover would throw the future of the loss-making Cunard cruise line into doubt. Kvaerner is likely to want to dispose of the subsidiary as soon as possible. The future of Trafalgar's commercial property division would also be uncertain.

Trafalgar acquired a reputation as an acquisitive conglomerate in the 1970s but was recast as an engineering and construction giant in the 1980s. A series of disastrous losses in the early 1990s led to Hongkong Land pouncing in 1992 after the share price dropped to just 40p.

Trafalgar has launched a major restructuring programme to help to stem the losses. It only confirmed the £170 million disposal of Ideal Homes to Persimmon yesterday morning.



Simon Keswick, left, a major stakeholder in Trafalgar through Hongkong Land, with Nigel Rich, the chief executive

Profits take off at Budgie company

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

BUDGIE the Helicopter, the cartoon character created by the Duchess of York, helped the marketing company Sleepy Kids to soar 86 per cent to record full-year profits of £1 million.

Sleepy Kids said that Budgie has now been sold to 70 countries and has 135 merchandising deals in operation throughout the world. The company recently agreed a \$1.3 million deal for television rights with Fox Children's Network in America. But the Duchess sold her rights to profits from the company's activities last month to an American investment group to ease her financial difficulties.

The company licenses two other children's animation programmes, Transylvania Pet Shop and Potsworth & Co. In a second royal link-up, Sleepy Kids also markets merchandise for the Prince's Trust.

Turnover in the year to

December 31 increased by 57 per cent to £1.76 million and the company declared its first ever dividend of 0.1p. Sleepy Kids added that it had lined up a deal to produce a new cartoon series with the Toronto-based Phoenix Animation.

Martin Powell, the chairman, restated the company's intention to move to a full Stock Exchange listing at a suitable moment. Shares in the company, which is currently quoted on the Unlisted Securities Market, rose 3p to 45p. The dividend is payable on May 13.

A third series of Transylvania Pet Shop was commissioned by Carlton last year, while Potsworth & Co was re-acquired by the BBC for a second licence term.

The Prince's Trust has also launched a major new campaign, entitled "Mask 96", which will market a series of painted masks to help raise funds for the charity.

Names to receive debt notification

By SARAH BAGNALL

LLOYD'S OF LONDON is to send out letters next Friday to 32,000 names detailing how much they will have to pay to leave the insurance market.

The so-called "indicative" statements will be the first idea names have of whether Lloyd's deems them to be in debt, in credit or bankrupt.

However, the statements are only preliminary calculations and will differ from final statements due out in July. According to sources close to Lloyd's, for the vast majority of names this difference will not exceed £15,000. For some names, however, this will be academic as they are bankrupt beyond salvation.

The statements will break down a name's bill into constituent parts, such as the litigation award, personal stop-loss recovery and allocations under each of the four tranches of the £2 billion debt write-off segment. Final hurdle, page 29

Barclays buys back £300m of shares

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BARCLAYS BANK has taken advantage of the 4 per cent fall in its share price since last Friday with a £300 million share buyback aimed at using surplus capital and enhancing earnings for shareholders.

The size and timing of the move surprised some in the City, although Barclays had been widely expected to repurchase some of its shares this week. It bought 40 million shares at 75p, a price that compares with Friday's close of 79 1/2p. This is the second repurchase, after last August's £180 million buyback.

Martin Taylor, chief executive, said the bank had indicated its intention to buy back shares as a way of managing capital, and "there was no reason not to get on with it".

The bank announced a 12 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £2.08 billion in 1995 after a 34 per cent reduction in bad debt provisions to £396 million. It has increased its dividend 24 per cent to 26p, with the final payment of 16.5p due on May 2. However,

Andrew Buxton, chairman, dampened speculation that Barclays would join its peers interested in buying a life insurance mutual or a building society, saying the present banking acquisition market is "overheated".

Profits from UK banking services were up from £1.25 billion to £1.27 billion, with increased net interest income and lower provisions offsetting a 9 per cent rise in costs.

The bank said half the costs reflected investment to improve efficiencies and customer service.

Barclays de Zoete Wedd reported an 18 per cent rise in profits to £286 million despite a 5 per cent rise in costs due to investment in people and systems. EZW completed the £275 million acquisition of Wells Fargo Nikko in December, taking its funds under management to £206 billion.

Losses in European retail banking increased from £8 million to £31 million after an increase in bad debt provisions from £33 million to £46 million. Other international and private banking profits fell from £241 million to £200 million after the sale of some of its businesses.

Barclays Financial Services, the insurance and retail broking arm, made profits of £148 million (£123 million). Corporate and institutional banking services profits rose £108 million to £169 million.



Taylor: managing capital

City Diary, page 29

Judge sets new date in pension dispute

By ROBERT MULLICK

A JUDGE has set a tough new timetable for many of the UK's leading life offices, including the Prudential, Norwich Union and Allied Dunbar, to settle potential cases of personal pensions mis-selling.

Judge Raymond Jack, QC, sitting at the Bristol Mercantile Court, has laid down that the companies alleged to have mis-sold pensions to members of the Royal College of Nursing and the GMB general union must be ready for the cases to go to trial by the end of this year. Last month, he ruled that the union members were entitled to seek compensation through the courts rather than be bound by the industry-wide personal pensions mis-selling review set up by the Securities and Investments Board (SIB).

The compensation bill for reinstating nurses, miners, teachers, police officers and public-sector workers who were wrongly advised to leave generous occupational schemes, or not to join in the first place, will account for a considerable proportion of the total compensation and costs bill, which could top £4 billion.

Other companies involved in the Bristol court case include Legal & General, Commercial Union, TSB Life, Abbey Life and Guardian. Philip Ryley, head of the pensions unit at Ringrose Wharton, the law firm acting for the unions, said the individual claims for alleged mis-selling range between £5,000 and £100,000. He added: "We are very pleased that the timetable set by the judge may prove to be a shorter time span than that set by the City regulators."

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Managers plan for Fokker survival

By Ross Tieman
INDUSTRIAL
CORRESPONDENT

MANAGERS at Fokker, the bankrupt Dutch aircraft manufacturer, unveiled their own rescue package yesterday after the Dutch Government announced it was providing an extension of its emergency credit for a further fortnight.

Under the plan, a slimmed-down Fokker would sell most of its output of 45 aircraft a year to a state-backed finance company that would lease them to airlines. Managers say the scheme would allow aircraft prices to be cut by up to 25 per cent, ultimately providing net profits of 150 million guilders (£60 million) on sales of 2.3 billion guilders (£920 million). But thousands more jobs would be lost from Fokker's remaining workforce of 6,600.

The Dutch government appears to hope that a sale to Samsung Aerospace of Korea can still be achieved. Bombardier, the Canadian planemaker that supplies wings for Fokker jets from its Short Brothers plant in Belfast, said that it would not make an offer. But Bombardier has a record of brinkmanship when negotiating the takeover of ailing state planemakers.

An extra 15 million guilders (£6 million) will be made available by the Dutch government while talks continue with Samsung. A Fokker spokesman said that the Korean company "has a good plan". Fokker's F70 and F70 jets, seating from 80 to 110 passengers, are the chief rivals to the Avro RJ range built by British Aerospace. British components make up more than half their value, including wings from Short Brothers, engines from Rolls-Royce and landing gear from TI.

GA leads rise in car premiums as winter accidents increase

By Marianne Curphey

MOTORISTS face rises in car insurance this year because of an increase in accidents during the recent cold snap, insurers said yesterday. General Accident, which has about 5 per cent of the personal motor market and writes 700,000 policies annually, said that its premiums would rise by about 4 per cent in April.

Other insurers confirmed that personal motor rates, which have been falling over the past couple of years and which dropped by an average of 5 per cent last year, were set to rise again.

Direct Line, the largest motor insurer, Royal Insurance, and Guardian Royal Exchange all said that prices would either stop falling or rise slightly for some drivers in 1996.

A spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers said: "By far the greatest number of claims are for accidents, not car crime, and claims are starting to rise again, particularly after the most recent winter storms. It is generally accepted that motor rates have reached their lowest point, although underwriting has become so specific that any rises will be assessed on an individual basis."

General Accident, which yesterday reported operating pre-tax profit of £436 million for the year to 31 December (1994: £434 million), said that drivers in provincial towns had enjoyed the greatest reductions in premiums and would therefore be in line now for a rise.

Worldwide, General Accident's underwriting deficit in-



Bob Scott is seeking European acquisitions for General Accident, after its takeover of Provident Mutual

creased in the fourth quarter of the year to £66 million (1994: £25 million loss), after severe weather losses of £40 million in the UK in the latter part of December. The deficit for the full year was up from £71 million to £130 million, mainly because of weather losses, which doubled to more

than £100 million in the 12 months, from £55 million. UK underwriting profit fell to £92 million (£200 million). Under new accounting rules, total pre-tax profits, which include realised investment gains of £123 million (1994: £70 million) amounted to £559 million, against £504

million for the previous year. The total dividend is 3p (1994: 29p). Bob Scott, chief executive, said that the group was seeking life and general insurance acquisitions in western Europe, particularly Germany, France, the Irish Republic or Belgium, and a life acquisition in the UK.

He was looking to repeat the success of the group's purchase of Provident Mutual, the pension provider, and, in spite of efforts to build up operations in Germany organically, believed that acquisition was the way forward.

Tempos, page 26

CinMan pensions chief quits

By Christine Buckley

BRITISH COAL'S pension schemes, the sale of which was derailed by a trustees' rebellion, were in fresh turmoil yesterday with the departure of the chief executive of CinMan, the management agency for the £17 billion worth of funds.

Barry Southcott is to leave the fund management operation on April 12 after just over 2½ years at the head of the scheme. Philip Hutchinson, British Coal's secretary and director of legal affairs, has been appointed chairman of CinMan, which is to be sold subject to agreement of trustees who earlier this month quashed an attempt to sell the business to Friends Provident.

The trustees are thought to favour a financial backer that would take a more hands-off approach than Friends Provident, which is thought to have offered £70 million to manage the funds. They backed Sal Oppenheim, a private German bank, which is believed to have offered under £18 million.

HTV says suitors have yet to make approach

By Eric Reguly

HTV, the ITV company that is considered a prime takeover candidate as the industry consolidates, said it had not been approached by potential purchasers even though it is not vigorously guarding its independence.

Christopher Rowlands, the chief executive, said that HTV would not automatically reject a takeover or merger proposal and that the new Broadcasting Bill, which will lift most of the restrictions on cross-media ownership, could present it with opportunities.

"We see enormous benefits from cross-media deals and alliances," he said. HTV's franchise covers the West of England and Wales. Analysis think that Carlton Communications and MAI, once its proposed merger with United News & Media is completed, would be HTV's most likely purchasers.

The company reported pre-tax profits of £12.1 million in the year to December 31, up 66 per cent, on turnover of £135 million, up 10.6 per cent.

Earnings per share were 10.5p against 6.3p. The final dividend of 2.5p will make the total dividend 3.75p, an increase of 67 per cent. HTV said that higher across-the-board margins and stronger operating profits from its new Harvest Entertainment division were behind the better results. Harvest,

which encompasses all of HTV's non-broadcasting activities, produces and distributes programmes, usually with international partners. Its operating profits grew 80 per cent to £4.5 million, while its profit margin went from 11 per cent to 15 per cent.

Tempos, page 26



Mr Rowlands, left, and Louis Sherwood, chairman

Domestic gas fight delayed

By Christine Buckley

COMPETITION in domestic gas supply for the south west of England is to be delayed after TransCo, British Gas's pipeline operator, lobbied for more time. The move to delay by four weeks the introduction of competition to the 500,000 households in the test area was criticised by rivals of British Gas who say they are ready to start supplying gas by April 1 — the original date. TransCo had originally wanted a delay until June to test fully its delivery systems.

Competition in supply for customers in the south west — which covers Cornwall, Devon and Somerset — has already seen rival suppliers offering price packages which undercut those available from British Gas by 25 per cent.

Next year the test area broadens to encompass Avon, Dorset, East and West Sussex and Kent, giving the choice of supplier to 2 million more households.

Full competition is due in 1998.

Nuclear wind-down fund to be launched

THE Government yesterday moved quickly to implement recommendations on the nuclear industry when it announced that a special fund to cover nuclear decommissioning costs will be set up from March 31 and will come into effect on privatisation, planned for the summer. Last week, the Commons' all-party Trade and Industry Select Committee cast doubt on privatisation of the industry when it urged that any purchaser — either through a flotation or via a trade sale — should accept responsibility for the industry's extensive liabilities. The committee also called on the Government to set up the planned segregated fund as quickly as possible.

The fund will receive from Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear a "large" initial lump sum — thought likely to be some hundreds of millions of pounds — followed by much smaller quarterly payments.

Apple aims to survive

GILBERT AMELIO, who took over as head of Apple Computer Inc three weeks ago, said yesterday that the troubled company's main goal was survival and that every aspect of the business was open to review. He said that Apple will have to simplify its structure and make sure that it retains its millions of loyal customers. Apple must improve the time it takes to get products to market, build on key markets such as publishing and focus more on users' needs, Mr Amelio said. Apple, which has short-term loans due in March and April, recently suspended its dividend.

Union back in black

GEORGE BLUNDEN, chief executive of Union, the financial services group, said he was feeling in buoyant mood yesterday after revealing that the company returned to the black with profits of £1.4 million in 1995. It had incurred a £3.5 million loss in 1994. Half the profit came from the release of provisions. Despite the improvement in its fortunes, the company is holding its dividend at 3p for the year, with the final payment of 1.5p due on April 26. The dividend has been held at this level since 1993, when Union returned to making payments.

Pensions fight resumes

CAMPAIGNERS for a fairer pension deal for divorced wives resume their fight tomorrow in the House of Lords, in the face of Government opposition. Baroness Hollis of Heigham, Labour's Social Security Spokesman in the Lords, will move an amendment to the Family Law Bill, requiring pensions to be split when couples divorce. Pension splitting at divorce is seen as a cheaper, fairer and simpler way of dividing the husband's pension, than a sharing out at retirement, as detailed in the Pensions Act 1995. The arrangement has the support of matrimonial lawyers and the pensions industry.

Irish home loans rise

NEW mortgage lending helped to push up the pre-tax profits of Irish Permanent by more than 20 per cent, to Ir£42.4 million, in the 12 months to December 31. The bank said that, in a very competitive market, its mortgage lending had increased by 19 per cent, to Ir£406 million, last year. Irish Permanent, the life assurance company, contributed earnings of Ir£9.5 million from the sales of life and pensions products. Total assets grew by 12 per cent, to Ir£4 billion, and the total net dividend has been increased by Ir£1.5p to Ir£10.5p per share.

New chief at Boeing

BOEING, the world's largest aircraft maker, has appointed Philip Condit, its president, as chief executive. He will replace Frank Shrontz, the chairman, who has also held the post. The reshuffle comes as Boeing mounts a huge cost-cutting drive to reinforce the advantage over Airbus Industrie, its European arch-rival, provided by the weakness of the US dollar. The shift in boardroom influence may also offer a chance for Boeing to revive merger discussions with McDonnell Douglas, its biggest American rival in civil jets, and on many military projects.

German yard relieved

BREMER VULKAN, Germany's biggest shipbuilder, was yesterday given a two-month stay of execution. The company's 30 creditor banks have agreed to keep it afloat for a short period while drastic restructuring plans are worked out. Despite the small glimmer of hope, the workforce was yesterday in a militant mood and refused to allow Günter Retzold, the Economics Minister, into the yards. The 22,000 workers — many of whom will be sacked according to preliminary restructuring plans — blame the Government for the financial crisis.

Visa spending leaps

THE French are Europe's greatest Visa card enthusiasts, using their plastic, on average, 10.4 times a month. The British, at four times a month, are less keen. The laggards in the Visa usage league are the Germans (1.7 times) and Italians (1.4 times). However, total Visa card spending in Europe in 1995 rose 22 per cent to \$269 billion. This was the largest rise for three years, according to figures published yesterday by Visa International, the consumer payment system business. Visa spending in Britain rose 17 per cent last year to £56.8 billion: the number of cards in circulation was up 9 per cent at 31.5 million.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sale
Australia \$	2.13	1.97
Austria Sch	15.79	15.38
Belgium Fr	49.07	44.77
Canada Cdn	7.52	6.88
Cyprus Cyp	0.752	0.687
Denmark Kr	0.27	0.27
Finland Mk	5.94	5.47
France Fr	6.11	5.68
Germany Dm	2.40	2.19
Greece Dr	367.00	368.00
Hong Kong \$	12.58	11.38
Ireland P	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	1.100	1.030
Italy Lira	2512.00	2258.00
Japan Yen	174.80	155.30
Malta	0.591	0.538
Netherlands Gld	2.662	2.430
New Zealand \$	2.43	2.21
Norway Kr	10.27	9.57
Portugal Esc	244.00	225.50
S Africa Rd	9.45	8.55
Spain Pta	166.50	162.50
Sweden Kr	11.02	10.22
Switzerland Fr	1.96	1.75
Turkey Lira	99818.0	94318.0
USA \$	1.62	1.51

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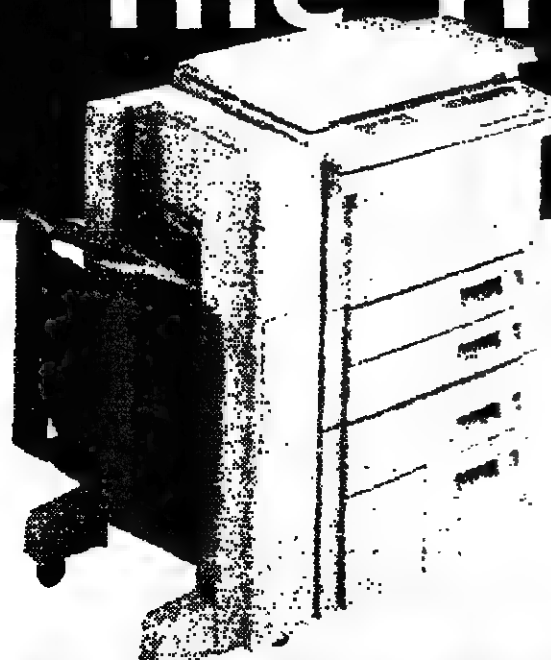
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□ Kvaerner puts down a marker □ Chancellor eyes investors' profits □ How we can all join the EMU club

All aboard the good ship Trafalgar

□ BASED on a normal demographic spread, the 390 rich Americans who had their world cruise aboard the liner Sagaford comprehensively ruined should have had 33 lawyers among them keen to help their shipmates in their time of need. Now, therefore, looks like an excellent time for the owners of the ship, Britain's own Trafalgar House, to be looking for a buyer.

The Sagaford, out of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., was stranded in the shark and pirate-infested South China Sea after a fire knocked out its main power systems. Some passengers may have gone for hours without a dry Martini, and the aerobics classes were certainly badly disrupted. Damage claims for the accompanying mental anguish are estimated at £720 million, coincidentally equal to Trafalgar's market capitalisation.

It is not yet clear whether Kvaerner, which would like to buy Trafalgar House, has appreciated the size of that contingent liability. But anyone prepared to bid for Amec, the battered contractor that inexplicably shook off the Norwegian embrace last year, must have nerves of steel.

The Norwegians insist on the need for the agreement of the Trafalgar board. This is making

something of a virtue out of a necessity. Not only is Hongkong Land's 26 per cent a substantial block if a deal cannot be struck, the Kvaerner management probably lacks the bottle for another hostile battle.

The question, therefore, is how much of a loss on their investment the Keswick family that controls Hongkong Land are prepared to stomach. They must curse the day they ever heard the name of Trafalgar House, after the Northern Electric drama and all those profit warnings. City estimates suggest that the average they paid for the shares was 85p, against a price for any offer now of 50p at best.

One attraction to Kvaerner is said to be the tax benefits from a business that lost £321 million last year; a clearer one is the offshore engineering business that was Amec's main appeal too. The difficulty is that to recoup any tax advantage, you have to make a profit. The Norwegians would also have to sell off large chunks of Trafalgar,

including the ropey old Cunard line whose hospitality all those American lawyers are now enjoying off the Philippines.

The best bet must be a carve-up between Kvaerner and the Keswicks, the latter departing with the boats along with a few bob to invest in them. Trafalgar shareholders, who must themselves have been tempted to reach for their lawyers over the past year, should know that any deal, if it comes, will be quite shortly — but at not much above the current market price.

Tucking away that Tessa windfall?

□ WE NOW have the first fragments of evidence to inform the great debate over whether British consumers will use various cash windfalls coming their way this year to save more or spend, spend, and spend. This is a far from sterile debate, because the Chancellor's forecast for growth this year relies on the assumption

PENNINGTON



that consumer spending will power the economy forward.

The building societies say that more than half of their customers who had invested in Tessa Mark One had reinvested in Tessa Mark Two within a month of their accounts maturing. This snap decision not to go shopping suggests that investors remain defensive, that confidence is fragile and that they are more likely to save than spend. If so, the Chancellor's optimism may be misplaced.

Much more may be reinvested in the months ahead when investors have had time to make considered decisions. The best

guess at this stage is still that the bulk of the money will be saved, if not in Tessa, then elsewhere. Many investors, amply rewarded by the high interest rates on the first round of Tessa, will find today's low interest rates unattractive. Despite having to pay tax, they may judge that investing in equities, even in a market that many fear has peaked, has more potential.

But what if the societies' survey turns out to be a good proxy for how investors are reacting to their Tessa earnings? Only around 50 per cent reinvestment would be astonishingly good news for the Government's optimistic forecast on consumer spending. Together with the fact that investors are only allowed to plough back the original capital but not the interest earned over the past five years, this should have the City worrying less about the Government falling short of its growth target and more about the danger of Lawson-type boom conditions. In this case, is the suggestion

by Demos that building society customers should at least give their merger bonuses to charity the only thing saving us from another old-fashioned British boom and bust cycle?

Maastricht, your flexible friend

□ PATRICK FOLEY, chief economist at Lloyds Bank, reckons that most EU states might after all qualify as founders of a European currency when the sums are done in exactly two years' time. Seven or eight should pass muster, given "a degree of flexibility in interpretation" of the Maastricht convergence tests.

Anyone examining the treaty will indeed find that the "excessive deficit" tests, at least, are highly flexible. They allow a budget deficit modestly above 3 per cent of gross domestic product provided it is "exceptional and temporary," and allow national debt of more than 60 per cent of GDP if "the ratio is

sufficiently diminishing and approaching the reference level at a satisfactory pace".

German internal propaganda, insisting criteria be met to the letter, should be seen in this paradoxical light. That letter is not strict. Member states can simply assume any test they miff is waived. This applies to Britain too, as Mr Foley shows. He says that only the UK, along with Germany and Luxembourg, will meet strict Maastricht numbers. Yet one *sine qua non* is that your currency has been a law-abiding member of the exchange-rate mechanism for two years — a test sterling cannot now meet.

Railway cutting

□ THE job losses now waiting on Platform Five will shortly be followed by a whole trainload more. South West Trains has announced the first round of redundancies by any privatised rail company. This injection of private sector rigour was, of course, the whole point in selling off the industry in the first place. The travelling public are to be reassured that the cuts will fall on cushy middle management jobs rather than the station staff. Believe that, and you may even believe the South West timetable.

Wimpey remains bullish despite £29m profits fall

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

WIMPEY, the construction group, maintained a bullish stance on the housing market yesterday despite reporting a slump in pre-tax profits for last year from £45.1 million to £15.6 million.

The fall was in line with City expectations. The company had warned earlier this month that its pre-tax profits for the year to December 31 would be no less than £15 million when revealing the financial details of its asset swap with Tarmac, which means that the group is now wholly involved in house-building.

The company, which is the UK leader in 2 to 3-bedroomed homes, sustained damage from lower margins, higher

incentive costs and flatness in selling prices in its house-building operations last year. Operating profits fell from £46.2 million to £28.3 million and, while the average selling price increased from £59,200 to £62,500, this was because of a change in product mix. But it said that early sales and inquiries in the first few weeks of this year indicated a lift in interest, and that activity was beginning to stir in the first-time buyer market again.

"Wimpey believes consumer confidence is growing with lower interest rates continuing, and that this will translate into sales as the year progresses," Joe Dwyer, chairman, said. "Low inflation, low

and probably declining interest rates and steady economic growth in the UK, US and Australia provides us with the sound base from which we can move forward with confidence. The early results for January and February from all our businesses, including forecasts from McLean Homes, give us cautious optimism for the rest of the year."

McLean Homes is the division that Wimpey will take from Tarmac and is primarily involved in larger, 4-bedroom-plus houses. In McLean's likely results for last year, the average selling price was expected to be similar to that of 1994, with turnover in line with that year's £485 million, it said.

More disposals are on the cards for Wimpey, which was left with several mining interests after its asset swap with Tarmac. The company hopes to raise up to £100 million from further sales of non-core operations over the next two years. Wimpey, which has a gearing of 33 per cent after a goodwill payment to Tarmac, will also need to increase its land bank over the medium term.

The final dividend, payable on May 8, was set at 3.5p, which maintains the total at the 1994 level of 5.5p.

High hopes: Joe Dwyer, Wimpey Homes chairman

Times, page 28

US West buys Continental Cablevision

US WEST is to buy Continental Cablevision, America's third largest cable operator, in a deal valued at more than \$10 billion. It will give US West access to a total of 13.9 million homes worldwide.

Cablevision serves 4.2 million customers in America, clustered in five large markets: New England, California, Chicago, Michigan/Ohio and Florida. The enlarged group will serve nearly one of every three cable-TV households.

US West will buy Continental's stock for \$5.3 billion, and will assume its debt and other obligations of \$5.5 billion. US West, together with TCI, is a big shareholder in TeleWest Communications, one of the largest UK cable operators. It also owns 50 per cent of Mercury One-2-One, the mobile phone company.

Newsprint costs hit Telegraph

By ERIC REGULY

THE TELEGRAPH, owner of The Daily Telegraph and its Sunday sister paper, has suffered a substantial fall in profits, but says the outlook is encouraging, partly because of an easing in the price war among national dailies.

Stephen Grabner, managing director, said: "The worst is over and things look reasonably good so far this year."

Pre-tax profits fell 21 per cent, to £35.5 million, in the year to December 31, on turnover up marginally, to £255 million. Operating profits were £15.4 million, against £20.1 million. Earnings per share were 17.3p (23.4p).

Steep newsprint price rises and a circulation battle were behind the lower results, The Telegraph said. Pre-tax profits

were skewed by a one-off gain of £7.5 million on the sale of a small stake in Carlton Communications and by various provisions, including the company's share in a £320 million (£56 million) charge taken by Southam, a Canadian newspaper publisher 10 per cent owned by The Telegraph.

Mr Grabner said that results should improve this year because the circulation war has become less intense, allowing The Daily Telegraph to raise its cover price from 30p to 40p. He also said that newsprint prices, which rose by almost 50 per cent in 1995, appear to have peaked and may even decline slightly this year.

The final dividend of 7.5p, making a total 13p, is unchanged from last year.

Tessa army stays loyal

By ROBERT MILLER

HOPES that billions of pounds from matured Tax Exempt Special Savings Accounts (Tessas) would be released into the economy appear to have been dashed by the Building Societies Association (BSA).

A BSA survey, published yesterday, reveals that 360,000 Tessa savers re-invested £2.8 billion in second generation Tessas with the same society. The average capital sum in the new accounts was almost £8,000, compared with the £9,000 upper limit. The association estimates that a further

£1.4 billion was re-invested in other investment accounts, again with the same society. Adrian Coles, director-general of the BSA, says: "Money from maturing Tessa accounts is being re-invested in building society accounts and is not going into the economy."

The findings will also disappoint City fund managers who had hoped to attract a large slice of the £5.5 billion invested in 560,000 Tessas. The BSA adds that at the end of January building society customers held 3.1 million

Tessas worth £20.1 billion. □ A new publication by Demos, the independent think-tank, yesterday called on societies that become public companies to put some of the proceeds allocated to free share bonuses towards community charitable purposes. Author David Shutt said up to 10 per cent of the bounty could be split between housing-related charities, community foundations, and general charitable purposes.

Pennington, this page
Rising profits, page 32

French conglomerate to demerge Pathé TV

By ERIC REGULY

CHARGEURS, the French textiles-to-television conglomerate, said yesterday that it plans to split into two companies. One of them, to be called Pathé, would hold the group's newspaper and entertainment interests, including a 17 per cent stake in BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

The demerger came as rumours

continued to circulate that BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of The Times, is in talks with CLT of Luxembourg about launching a digital satellite broadcasting service in continental Europe.

CLT's interests range from Britain's Talk Radio and France's Top Santé magazine to a variety of TV stations in Belgium, Germany, France and Lux-

embourg. Neither CLT nor BSkyB would comment, although a deal is not said to be imminent.

In addition to the BSkyB stake, Pathé will hold Pathé Television, a 20 per cent stake in Canalsatellite, 65 per cent of Pathé Interactive, 12 per cent of Libération, the French newspaper, and the Pathe cinemas.

Chargeurs International will hold the rest of the group, which includes

the fabrics and wools businesses and the transportation and surface coatings companies.

Chargeurs said the demerger would enable both companies to focus on their business sectors and make it easier for them to form partnerships. It said that its preliminary loss for 1995 would be Fr575 million, which partly reflects a writedown of Fr140 million on Libération.



General Accident

RECORD PROFIT MAINTAINED

1995 RESULTS

	Year to 31.12.95 Unaudited £m	Year to 31.12.94 Audited £m
General Premiums	4,409	4,253
Net Investment Income	523	467
Underwriting Result	(130)	(71)
Life Profits	71	59*
Operating Profit before Taxation	436	434*
Profit Attributable to Ordinary Shareholders	382	362*
Operating Earnings per Ordinary Share	66.5p	68.1p

*Revised

- Operating pre-tax profit of £436m is despite a near doubling of severe weather losses to over £100m.
- UK underwriting profit of £92m is the second best ever achieved.
- Improving trend continues in the United States.
- Reduced underwriting deficit in Canada.
- Excellent new business production from UK life.
- Final dividend of 20.3p per share making a total of 31.0p per share for the year — an increase of 6.9%.
- Net asset value up 51% to £3,380m, equivalent to 653p per share. Solvency margin 77%.

Bob Scott, Group Chief Executive, comments:

"We have maintained a record operating performance in 1995 and remain confident regarding prospects for 1996".

General Accident plc

General Accident plc, World Headquarters: Pitheavlis, Perth, Scotland PH2 0NH
A copy of the full results are available on Internet: <http://www.communicata.co.uk/ga>

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

City stirred by prospect of bid for ailing Trafalgar

THE stock market went back on bid alert last night after news that Kvaerner, the Swedish industrial group, wants to bid for ailing Trafalgar House. The statement from Kvaerner, which owns the Govan shipyard and last year failed to win control of Amec, the construction group, was accompanied by a jump in the Trafalgar share price of 3p to 47 1/2p as almost 27 million shares were traded.

Whispers in the Square Mile claimed Kvaerner was prepared to offer 55p for each of the ordinary shares and par 140p for the cumulative preference shares, which would value the debt-laden Trafalgar at more than £500 million.

Kvaerner said any deal would have to be agreed. Talk of a bid for Trafalgar had been circulating for several weeks. Now City speculators want to know which way Hong Kong Land, with 26.1 per cent of Trafalgar, will move.

The news focused attention on other potential bid targets such as Allied Domecq, which added 4p to 52 1/2p. BSKyB, the satellite broadcaster, was also the subject of an early flurry of speculative buying that saw the price touch 41 1/2p after shares of Chargeurs, its 17 per cent shareholder, were suspended on the Bourse.

This was followed by wild talk that Chargeurs was planning to sell its stake to Sony, the Japanese electronics group, which would then use it as a platform to bid for the rest of BSKyB. It later emerged that Chargeurs planned to split its entertainment and industrial operations into separate companies to be called Pathe and Chargeurs International. The stake in BSKyB will be owned by Pathe. BSKyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, publisher of The Times, finished 5 1/2p higher at 308 1/2p.

The rest of the equity market put up an impressive performance in the face of sharp overnight falls on Wall Street. The FT-SE 100 index closed back an early fall to finish 11 1/2p on the day at 3,715.9. But trading conditions remained thin, with a total turnover of 732 million shares.

Guinness put on 9p to 45 1/2p as UBS, the broker, took a more positive stance on the shares and took them off its sell list. Last week Morgan Stanley told clients that it was a buyer of Guinness.



Michael Webber, chairman of Pifco, where pre-tax profits rose

ICI climbed 11p to 88 1/2p after claims that ABN Amro Hoare Govett had upgraded its profit forecast and was taking the shares up to 95p. Barclays waited several hours after declaring record profits to announce it also plans to buy back up to 40 million shares, or 2.5 per cent of the issued share capital, at 76 1/2p. The buyback will be

carried out by BZW and Cazenove and will cost in the region of £310 million. The shares finished 4p down at 76 1/2p, having briefly been as low as 75 1/2p.

HSBC climbed 17p to £10.73 as brokers began upgrading their estimates for the current year in the wake of last year's impressive rise in profits, which were announced on Monday.

Standard Chartered, reporting today, firmed 2p to 30 1/2p. General Accident managed higher profits last year in spite of worse than expected bad-weather claims of £100 million. Pre-tax profits were 4 per cent ahead at £523 million. The shares rose 13p to 65 1/2p.

HTV, the regional television broadcaster, retreated 3p to 37 1/2p as the company played

down bid speculation. Louis Sherwood, the chairman, told brokers the company had received no formal approach. The denial coincided with full-year figures showing pre-tax profits 66 per cent ahead at £12.1 million.

There had been claims HTV would find itself on the receiving end of a bid from Michael Green's Carlton Communications. 5p easier at 40 1/2p. This

followed a spate of bid activity in the media sector that saw United News & Media's proposed merger with MAI, down 2 1/2p to 40 1/2p, and Granada, 3p firmer at 71 1/2p, increasing its stake in Yorkshire-Tyne Tees, 11p down at £10.21.

There were few surprises from George Wimpey, Britain's biggest housebuilder, with pre-tax profits tumbling from £45.1 million to £16.6 million. Commenting on its proposed asset swap with Tarmac, Wimpey said the net cash outflow was likely to be in the region of £40 million. Wimpey slipped 2p to 13 1/2p and Tarmac 1p to 11 1/2p.

The Telegraph, publisher of The Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph, fell 16p to 46 1/2p after reporting a £9.5 million drop in profits to £35.5 million. Two rises in the cover price had helped to offset a sharp rise in the newspaper costs.

Half-year figures from Pifco, the domestic appliances group, rose 4p to 20 1/2p after lifting pre-tax profits £170,000 to £1.57 million. Michael Webber, the chairman, said the group planned to launch new products during 1996.

First-time dealings in Freepages, the telephone directory services group, got under way on AIM following a placing and open offer by Collins Stewart, the broker, at 12p. The shares started life at 15 1/2p before ending the day at 15p, a premium of 3p.

GIILT-EDGED: Prices recovered from opening falls to end with modest gains after making the most of rallies among German bunds and US Treasury bonds. Traders said most attention was focused on today's auction of £5 billion of Treasury 8 per cent 2021, which is expected to be well received. Brokers were not anticipating much in the way of short selling ahead of the event.

In the futures pit, the March series of the log gilt closed seven ticks higher at £106 1/2, as a total of 77,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 rose five ticks to 98 1/2, while at the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 1/2p better at £103 1/2.

New York: Shares on Wall Street were sharply lower in volatile trading amid growing uncertainty over interest rates. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 51.66 at 5,513.44.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 5513.44 (-51.66)

S&P Composite 644.59 (-5.48)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average 20000.40 (-479.87)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng 11977.02 (-13.40)

Amsterdam:

EEX Index 307.60 (-0.36)

Sydney:

ASX 2287.17 (-7.40)

Frankfurt:

DAX 2444.92 (-2.58)

Singapore:

Straits 2465.57 (-25.59)

Brussels:

General 8717.97 (-3.23)

Paris:

CAC-40 1974.52 (-13.58)

Zurich:

SIX Gen 729.50 (+0.38)

London:

FT 100 3715.9 (+11.5)

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TEMPUS

Barclays' cash machine

BARCLAYS' £300 million share buyback yesterday could disappoint only those who had expected a grander, one-off gesture. The bank took advantage of the market's recent negative view to act, buying in 40 million shares at 76 1/2p.

The message from Martin Taylor, chief executive, yesterday was that he is perfectly happy with Barclays' tier one capital ratio of 7.2 per cent. The ratio is a measure of a bank's capital strength — 5 per cent is about the minimum accepted for a large clearing bank, but Mr Taylor says he could live with it at 6 per cent. However, the bank is enjoying its current capital strength. Yesterday's move will take the 7.2 per cent figure at the end of December down to 6.9 per cent, but Barclays is adding to its tier one ratio at a rate of nearly 0.1 per cent a month. This will put the bank in

a strong position to make a further repurchase after its interim results. The time window is tight, as it needs to be within a few weeks of the results. After last year's £180 million repurchase of 25 million shares — taking the total to 4 per cent of issued share capital — Barclays appears to be setting a trend for the future of a series of smaller, regular repurchases. The benefits of the latest manoeuvre were not reflected in the share price, which ended the day lower at 76 1/2p, standing at a discount to the sector.

But Mr Taylor says banking is a long-term, not short-term, business, and that the capital management measures, increased investment in the businesses and restructuring will pay off in the long run. Negative sentiment will not go away overnight, though the shares will look a better bet as time passes.

General Accident

GENERAL ACCIDENT announced yesterday that it was raising its motor rates to continue writing profitable business — a marked contrast to rival Commercial Union, which has vowed to cut premiums to increase market share.

Declarations such as GA's are always well received by the City and are particularly welcome at a time when the insurance industry shows signs of a cyclical downturn.

Rising claims and fierce competition mean 1996 will be a tough year for insurers. GA has performed better than many in its sector, but it needs to look at its underwriting strategy and keep tight control of claims costs.

After snapping up a bargain in the form of Provident Mutual, the company now wants to acquire another life

Insurer

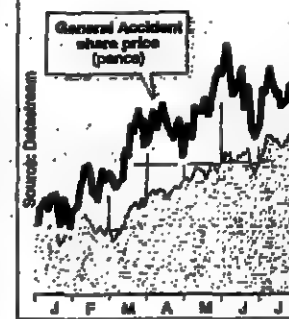
The cost of reinsuring Provident Mutual will be about £15 million — equivalent to the profits it will bring in this year. But GA will be keen to sort out Provident before making another acquisition.

Despite being at pains to get out of unprofitable business in France and Denmark, GA is now looking for

compatible general or life insurers in western Europe. But cost-cutting, not expansion into Europe, is the solution to a downturn in the UK market.

Shares, trading at a discount to the net asset value of 65 1/2p, still look cheap, but only if GA can restrain itself from a hasty purchase across the Channel.

TOP OF THE CYCLE



Wimpey

ONE could say it is a case of hope beyond hope to believe that the housing market is about to take off.

But optimism is, at the moment, one of the foundation stones of Wimpey's business. It has to be. A company that plunges into house building in the current environment has to have either incredible foresight or several fingers crossed.

Many looked on the recent asset swap with Tarmac and wondered just what Wimpey was getting out of it. That transaction, after approval by shareholders this week, will be completed on Friday.

But Wimpey, which will now be wholly oriented to housebuilding, said it believed consumer confidence would improve with continued lower interest rates and that house price inflation would run at about 2-3 per cent in the second half of this year.

Despite such robust confi-

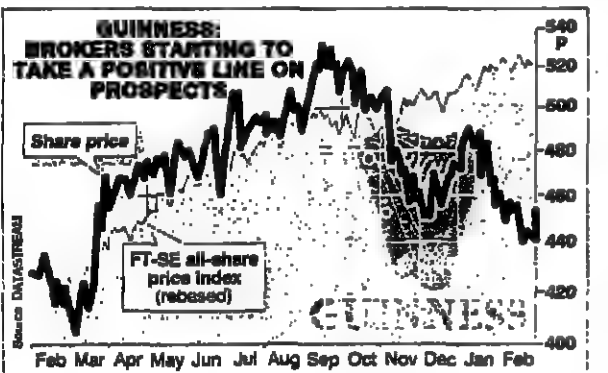
dence, and who knows it may prove well placed, Wimpey still has to find the cash in the long term to top up its land bank. Returns, if they prove forthcoming, will come in the immediate future as it sells houses. But in the long term Wimpey has rendered itself a hostage to economic fortune and the cyclical swings in the housing market without being able to counter with less volatile ventures.

HTV

INDIVIDUAL investors would be foolish to buy a stock on rumours that a takeover will earn them handsome returns. But HTV, the West of England and Wales television franchise holder, is a different story. With Scottish and Yorkshire Tyne Tees HTV, forms a trio of ITV companies of any size that remain independent. The consensus in the City is that they will eventually get swept up in the consolidation craze.

Carlton, the ITV company which didn't have the courage to bust up the proposed MAI-United merger, is one of the lead candidates for HTV. If a miracle happens and HTV manages to hold out, the shares will inevitably drift down, but they are unlikely to plummet. HTV's effort to distance itself from the ITV network, thus making it less dependent on volatile ITV advertising income, is beginning to bear fruit. One new source of income is the "rights" business, which creates and distributes programming with international partners. It also expects to save millions by renegotiating its licence fee and it appears to have a good case.

HTV pays £23.3 million a year for its licence, while Scottish Television, which managed to avoid a bidding war for the franchise, pays virtually nothing. Negotiations to cure the anomaly are to begin this year with the Independent Television Commission. HTV shareholders should hang on.



COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA

Mar 96 1000000 1000000

Apr 96 1000000 1000000

May 96 1000000 1000000

Jun 96 1000000 1000000

Jul 96 1000000 1000000

Aug 96 1000000 1000000

Sep 96 1000000 1000000

Oct 96 1000000 1000000

Nov 96 1000000 1000000

Dec 96 1000000 1000000

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LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

FT-SE 100

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Barclays — man and boy

MARTIN TAYLOR, who has been banking with Barclays since he was a boy, admits that before he became chief executive in January 1994, "I was bombarded with circular letters". Seemingly oblivious to Taylor's rise to power and wealth at Courtlands Textiles, and to the savings and investment potential of such a customer, somebody at Barclays' Burnley branch kept on sending him monthly missives encouraging him to borrow money so that he could apply for a mortgage and buy a new car as well. Finally, he says, "I was able to stop it by becoming chief executive". Taylor says no criticism is intended and adds the branch has never made a mistake on his account.

It's good for Bob

BT IS on a roll with its new £50 million television advertising campaign since pinning down comedian "big yin" Billy Connolly, to appear alongside his cockney chum Bob Hoskins. Although Hoskins is in the third and final year of his contract with BT, he claims to be having fun with the latest pile of scripts sent by ad agency Abbott Mead Vickers. He boasts: "We've got it down to a fine art now, and we're just churning them out." His BT catchphrase "It's good to talk" must ring true. According to Hoskins: "I'm never off my mobile."



Hoskins still talking

Firm friends

THERE was much networking in the Guildhall crypt last night where, at an official dinner, the Lord Mayors of London and Bratislava agreed they both have much to offer. British exports to Slovakia were \$84.2 million and its imports here were \$74.7 million as of last August. Shell and Tate & Lyle are already big investors in a country hoping to become a fully-fledged part of an integrated Europe.

THE Lords Stevens and Hollick are obviously determined to make their United News/MAI merger as much fun as possible. An advance in The Stage reads: "Help! We desperately need bubbly, friendly and efficient bar/rest-aurant staff to work at Express Newspapers at Blackfriars. £4.35 per hour..."

He's back

IF LONRHO ever thought Tiny Rowland, now no longer a director, would ride off into the sunset never to be heard of again, they got it wrong. It's Lonrho's AGM today, at the Barbican, and Tiny tells me: "I'll be there". Whether the man actually speaks remains to be heard. But since Tiny is still incensed about Lonrho's recent platinum deal, take a packed lunch. It could be a long meeting, starting at 11am.

DUN & BRADSTREET, the business information group, is doing its bit for 14-16 year olds anxious to learn more about business. It is offering 500 free CD Roms, Key British Enterprises — otherwise £2,000 each, to secondary schools on a first come — first served basis.

COLIN CAMPBELL

UK defence business revels in call to arms by French

Chirac-led reforms will bring industry shakeup, says Ross Tieman

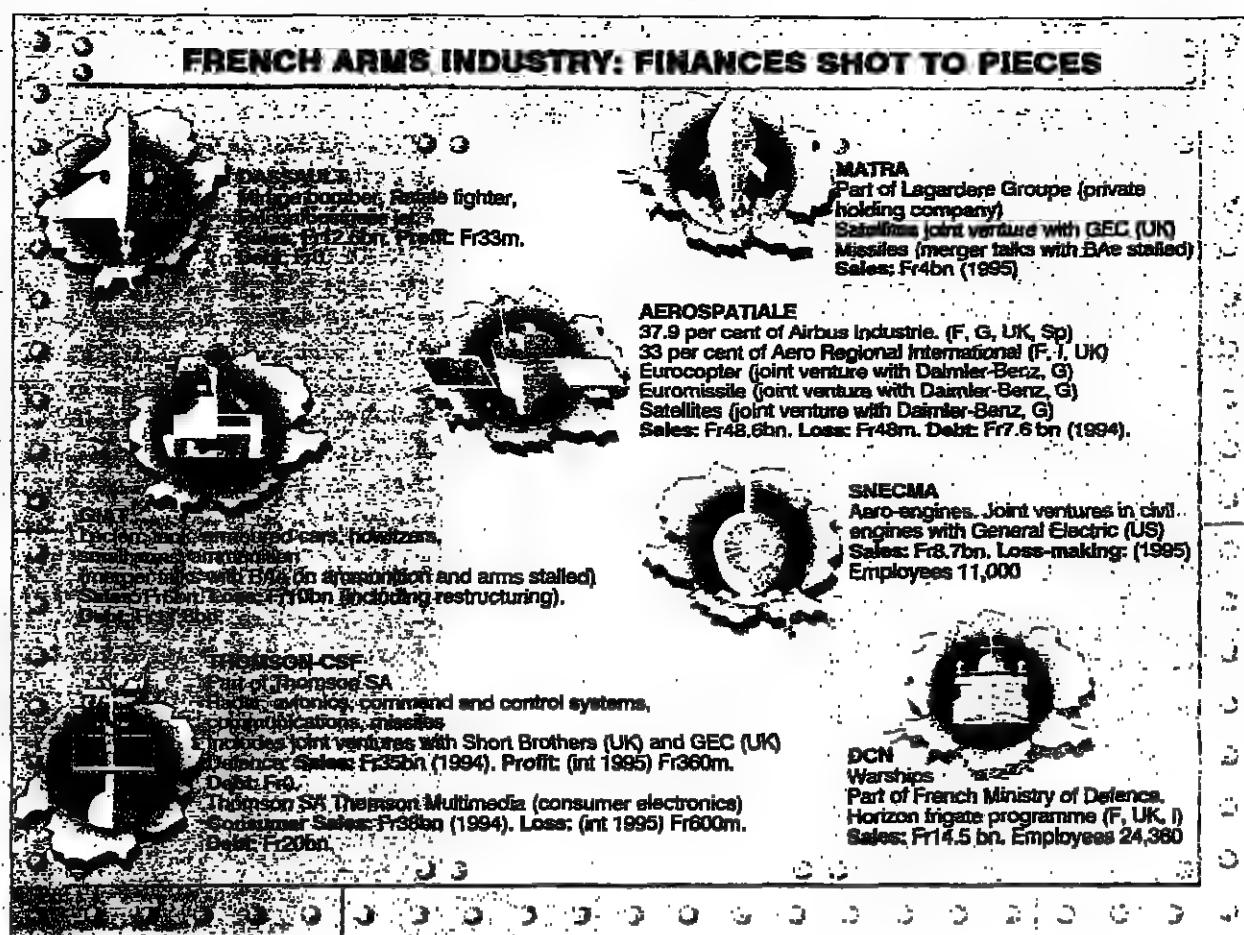
Richard Lapthorne, the Franco-philic finance director of British Aerospace, should be smiling. Not only is Britain's biggest defence contractor poised to announce a remarkable profits recovery tomorrow, but the overdue restructuring of the French aerospace and defence industries, critical to the future of BAe and its suppliers, is at last gathering pace.

The importance of reforms unleashed by President Jacques Chirac is not obvious this side of the Channel. The British Government has done its best to ease the pain of post-Cold War restructuring in the largest manufacturing sector by negotiating government-to-government weapons export contracts with Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Brunei. But it left its private-sector arms industry to take the opprobrium, and the enormous costs, of factory closures, mass redundancies and mergers.

Although incomplete, the process has been under way for five years. Across the Atlantic, Bill Clinton has taken a similar tack, lobbying for overseas orders and waving through an unprecedented industrial consolidation. Lockheed Martin, after a string of quick-fire mergers, now boasts annual sales of \$30 billion and relishes the opportunity to see almost \$800 million a year of duplicated costs.

Astonishing and rapid improvements in the cost-competitiveness of American and, to a lesser extent, British rivals has combined with strong currencies to highlight the overmanning and excess costs of French and German manufacturers. Handcapped by legislation to protect jobs, companies have recorded deepening losses.

In France, state-ownership, strong unions and weak economic growth have made re-



structuring politically unpalatable. Nonetheless tentative moves have begun. Motivated partly by the desire to limit threats from any future German military resurgence, France's state aerospace company, Aerospatiale, was levered into merging its helicopter, missile and satellite businesses with those of Daimler-Benz. But the sites and programmes remained little changed within a common ownership.

The French and Germans have also launched a common defence procurement agency as a first step toward creating the common market in weapons that would give Europe's arms-makers the economies of market scale enjoyed by American rivals.

But deprived of export markets, Germany's arms industry is a minnow compared to those of Britain and France, which vie for second place in the world league after the United States. But even the

largest European weapons company, British Aerospace, is just a third the size of Lockheed Martin.

President Chirac's reorganisation is partly designed to help French arms companies negotiate mergers with British and other rivals on equal terms. Dassault, the family-controlled warplane maker, is being frogmarched into a marriage with Aerospatiale. This will bring together the small, but profitable and debt-free manufacturer of Mirage and Rafale jets with the loss-making state aircraft group, which labours under Fr7.6 billion of debts.

Thomson-CSF, the electronics group that had been discussing a merger with GEC-Marconi, its chief UK rival, is to be packaged with its consumer electronics sister, Thomson Multimedia, and privatised this year. The plan will burden the profitable and debt-free defence arm with a TV and hi-fi maker carrying

debts of Fr20 billion. Quite how this will make it easier for the well-run defence business to carry on its internationalisation is unclear.

But this is just a start. SNECMA, the state-controlled aero-engine maker, has enjoyed a successful 25-year partnership with General Electric of the US. This is under increasing strain because SNECMA, overmanned, undercapitalised and insufficiently profitable, cannot afford to match Rolls-Royce on prices for civil jet engines. The problem is most acute in the contest to equip Boeing's new sub-jumbo, the 777, where Rolls has snatched 60 per cent of orders from Far East airlines, while SNECMA loses money on every GE90 engine sold.

Giat, the state manufacturer of tanks, armoured cars and the like, has been in talks to merge its armaments, field-guns and small arms, business with BAe's Royal Ordnance. But losses last year,

including restructuring costs, were Fr10 billion, on sales of Fr6 billion. Debts now exceed Fr11.8 billion, on a capital base of Fr3 billion. A cash injection is the prelude to any deal.

But the biggest problem for President Chirac is DCN, owned by the defence ministry, which designs and builds France's warships. Output value has slumped from Fr20 billion in 1990 to Fr14.5 billion last year as orders have been cut back. Output per head is 70 per cent of that achieved by rivals. Protest marches have already begun as job cuts loom.

A recent report by Henri Corze, French chief of defence procurement, shows how far attitudes have changed. "It is desirable a true contractual relationship of the customer-supplier type be established between DCN and the procurement executive, and that there should be separation between the two," it said.

After decades of chauvinism, Anglo-Saxon business attitudes have at last gained the upper hand in France. This should open doors for Britain's defence champions. But the moves have not gone unnoticed across the Atlantic. America is taking down barriers to British defence exports: partnership links with American companies are also on the agenda. Thanks to President Chirac, the doors are opening to the international mergers the industry, and taxpayer, need so desperately.

Many a slip possible as Lloyd's nears final hurdle

It is fast approaching crunch time at Lloyd's of London. After months of hard toil, number crunching and intense negotiations, Lloyd's ambitious £2.8 billion reconstruction and renewal plan is entering its final stages. But critical hurdles remain and the plan could founder at the close.

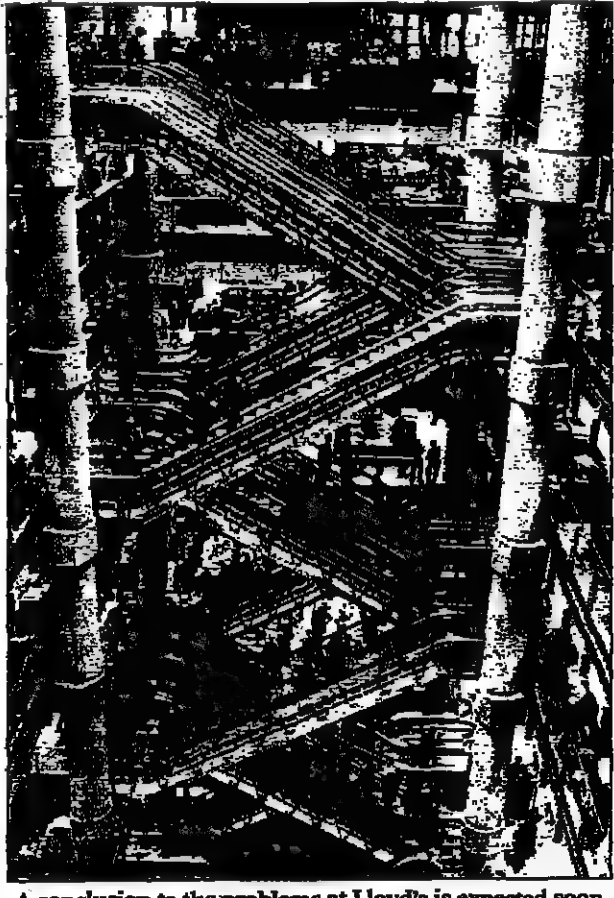
The plan, called R&R, was unveiled nearly a year ago with two basic aims. First, to end the mass of legal actions brought by thousands of malcontent names and to prevent other actions from rearing their ugly heads. Secondly — and more fundamentally — to enable Lloyd's to survive.

In just over a week, a long-awaited letter will land on thousands of names' door-mats. The contents will give the 32,000-odd recipients an indication of how much they have to pay to escape from the insurance market. Currently names have no idea whether they are deemed by Lloyd's to be in debt, in credit or just plain bankrupt.

The contents will undoubtedly shock many, upset others and please a paltry few. As a result, the letters, due to be sent next Friday, are expected to provoke an outcry from numerous quarters, adding steam to the already heated debate over the R&R plan.

Lloyd's resembles a nest of competing vipers, some of which are stubborn, some deluded and others unable to distinguish reality from imagination. The symptoms are evident in all the constituent parts of Lloyd's — the agents, the council, ongoing names, burnt names, the errors and omissions underwriters, the personal stop-loss underwriters, the brokers, and the syndicates' auditors.

The problem is that each one has different goals and grates but are linked together like squares on a Rubik cube. A slight movement in one quarter often has unimaginable knock-on effects elsewhere. For the last ten months each group has postured and positioned in a bid to ensure they get the best possible result from the impending deal. But no deals have yet been struck.



A conclusion to the problems at Lloyd's is expected soon

Under the plan, £800 million is being offered as an out-of-court settlement to litigating names while £2 billion is being used to write down names' debts. Action-group leaders say the package is inadequate, arguing that it needs a substantial boost if Lloyd's wants to ensure names will vote to accept the offer in the summer.

However, at present every argument is pure rhetoric. Without a breakdown of the offer at the individual names' level, no proclamation of intent has any validity as a name cannot claim he will reject the offer without knowing what that offer means to him. And even the indicative breakdown about to be revealed is still not final as the figures used to calculate the outcome are not yet fixed. The lack of final figures partly reflects the lack of deals made with the various contributors to the package.

This is because the E&O underwriters, PSL underwriters, Lloyd's agents and auditors are all holding their cards close to their chests and will continue bluffing until forced to show their hands.

At the same time the Department of Trade and Industry has not yet given the green light to Equitas, the reinsurer company being set up by Lloyd's to take over responsibility for the mass of old-year liabilities.

The DTT was due to have passed judgment by the end of this month. However, it is not in a position to do so. This again reflects the lack of numerical data. The DTT's responsibility is to ensure that Equitas is adequately reserved and, if not assured of this fact, the regulator can deny the company an operating licence. However, the DTT is unable to

act until it has received up-to-date details on syndicates' reserving and expected liabilities. This should be available within the next few weeks.

As a result, second guessing the DTT's decision on Equitas' reserving and capital is far from simple. The regulator may deem the £15 billion already held by Lloyd's syndicates together with a further £1.9 billion injection by names as ample. However, there is some concern it may demand an extra lump sum to act as a cushion. This partly reflects the fact that many future liabilities are impossible to quantify.

If the DTT demands an extra injection this will not aid the wrangle over the need for an extra boost to the litigation part of the package. If Lloyd's successfully entices auditors, or other parties, to make a sizeable contribution, then the added bonus might not be available to bolster the £800 million litigation fund as it may be absorbed into Equitas.

One possible answer is for Equitas to accept external funding, but this would be considered unpopular by names as it would erode any potential financial return made by Equitas.

Conversely, if the DTT deems the reserving and planned injection as adequate then any extra funds raised would be available to increase the litigation fund. There is some hope that the fund can be increased. Auditors are still not playing ball while both the E&O underwriters and Lloyd's agents are resisting pressure to lift their contributions from £800 million and £200 million respectively.

The reluctance on the part of the agents partially reflects the fact that many of them are owned by their directors and so any increase in the contribution will affect individual wallets not company coffers.

But this is not a dress rehearsal. If Lloyd's fails to win support for R&R from names this summer the insurance market's long-running fight for survival will be over. There will be no more chances.

SARAH BAGNALL



ANTHONY HARRIS

US 'recovery' brings out the hungry bears

Nobody in authority has actually used the R-word yet. But Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Chairman, did remark in his Humphrey-Hawkins testimony last week that the US economy is "on track", and that was enough. The Wall Street bond bears, the most frustrated group of speculators in the world, came promptly out of their lairs. They sold the long bond future into an already weak market, and were soon up to their usual bearish tricks: rumours of heavy losses by George Soros, among other hedge funds, caused a further fall of the vapours. By Monday, a prompt denial had restored some calm; but Wall Street is now a haunted place, shuddering at every creak of renewed activity.

In economic terms, the whole affair looks inexplicable. True, the US labour market is now seen as tight; but that is the only blemish in what remains the dream scenario — a genuine soft landing. How can growth be a worry in an economy in which inflation remains low, wage growth steady, and which has just posted quarterly growth at a mere 0.6 per cent annual rate? The bears point to distortions. Correct for the federal Government shutdown and exceptional weather, and the underlying rate comes up to 1.6 per cent at an annual rate. Still modest; but the manufacturing slowdown can be seen as the tail end of a mild inventory correction; and, most sinister of all, demand in the housing market is genuinely strong.

This is a matter of question by association. It is widely understood on Wall Street, though not elsewhere, that the 1994 bond market disaster (when a quarter-point rise imposed by the Fed began a bond market avalanche) originated in the market for mortgage-backed securities, where leveraged holders found themselves holding long-term fixed-rate portfolios at a potential running loss. Could it happen again? Probably not. These investors have surely learnt not to leave their hedging efforts to the last moment; but no one can be sure. Then there is the ghost of 1987: could rising bond yields and falling equity yields again herald a crash?

The fact is that vertigo is inevitable in a market that has risen as dizzily as Wall Street; but unease is strengthened by a genuine puzzle. Why have bonds all over the world weakened so much in recent weeks? It can hardly be the fear of inflationary growth; the slide started when recession fears were at a peak, especially in Europe. A bond boom has been justified economically; but its technical foundation looks dangerous. It is not just a boom, but a bubble: many professional bond positions are not just leveraged, but subject to exchange risk, since they have been financed by cheap yen loans. At every revival of the yen exchange rate, some of these positions are nervously closed.

Believing monetarists, an endangered species still to be found in healthy numbers in bond research, are also worried by another yen-related phenomenon: the renewed growth of broad money, notably in the US and UK. A lively M4 debate is already joined in London, led rather predictably by NatWest and Professors Tim Congdon on the one hand, and Roger Bootle and Flemings for calm. M4 presages inflation — or it simply means that bidding companies are accumulating war chests. But it could be bad for bonds even if it does not presage inflation: in the simplest NatWest statement: "Regardless of inflation prospects, accelerated money growth is always bad for bonds."

This crunching statement is thin on analysis, but well supported by history, and part of the debate is whether we are reliving 1994 — weak bonds but slowing inflation, so a full recovery — or 1988, when excessive monetary pump-priming after the 1987 crash did cause inflation. Weak consumer incomes, and demand constrained by a heavy debt burden sound like 1994; aggressive bank expansion and the sheer scale of Japanese money creation are more like 1988. Instinct says that recent history almost never repeats itself; its lessons are too vivid. The economic weather, then, still looks settled. But nervous markets have their own laws, and a sudden restoration of calm is not among them.

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1995/6 High Low Company		P/E (x)	Yld % P/E	1995/6 High Low Company		P/E (x)	Yld % P/E	1995/6 High Low Company		P/E (x)	Yld % P/E
6.5%	3.5%	Control	100	1.0	6.5%	3.5%	Control	100	1.0	6.5%	3.5%

Modest gains in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes in yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%
36	47	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
37	48	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
38	49	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
39	50	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
40	51	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
41	52	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
42	53	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
43	54	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
44	55	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
45	56	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
46	57	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
47	58	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
48	59	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
49	60	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
50	61	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
51	62	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
52	63	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
53	64	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
54	65	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
55	66	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
56	67	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
57	68	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
58	69	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
59	70	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
60	71	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
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62	73	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
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64	75	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
65	76	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
66	77	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
67	78	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
68	79	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
69	80	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
70	81	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
71	82	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
72	83	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
73	84	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
74	85	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
75	86	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
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77	88	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
78	89	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
79	90	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
80	91	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
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105	116	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
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144	155	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
145	156	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
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148	159	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
149	160	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
150	161	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8
151	162	3M	125.00	+1.00	0.8	100	105	3M	125.00		

هكذا من الأجل

* Yield expressed as EAR (Compound Annual Return)
† Ex dividend \$ middle price. No significant data.
‡ Periodic Charge deducted from capital + \$ Eval

هكذا من الأصل



THEATRE 1

Is it sensible for the National to woo Trevor Nunn, one of the world's busiest directors?



THEATRE 2

Sub-Stoppardian conceits and post-Python doodles in the new *All in the Timing*

THE TIMES ARTS



THEATRE 3

Vanessa and Corin Redgrave treat the Texans to their lively stagings of Shakespeare



TOMORROW

Noël Coward's wry thespian comedy, *Present Laughter*, reviewed by Benedict Nightingale

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale warns against a part-time captain following Eyre at the National. Plus reviews

Can Nunn really be the answer?

A little flimsy whimsy

All in the Timing
Nottingham
Playhouse

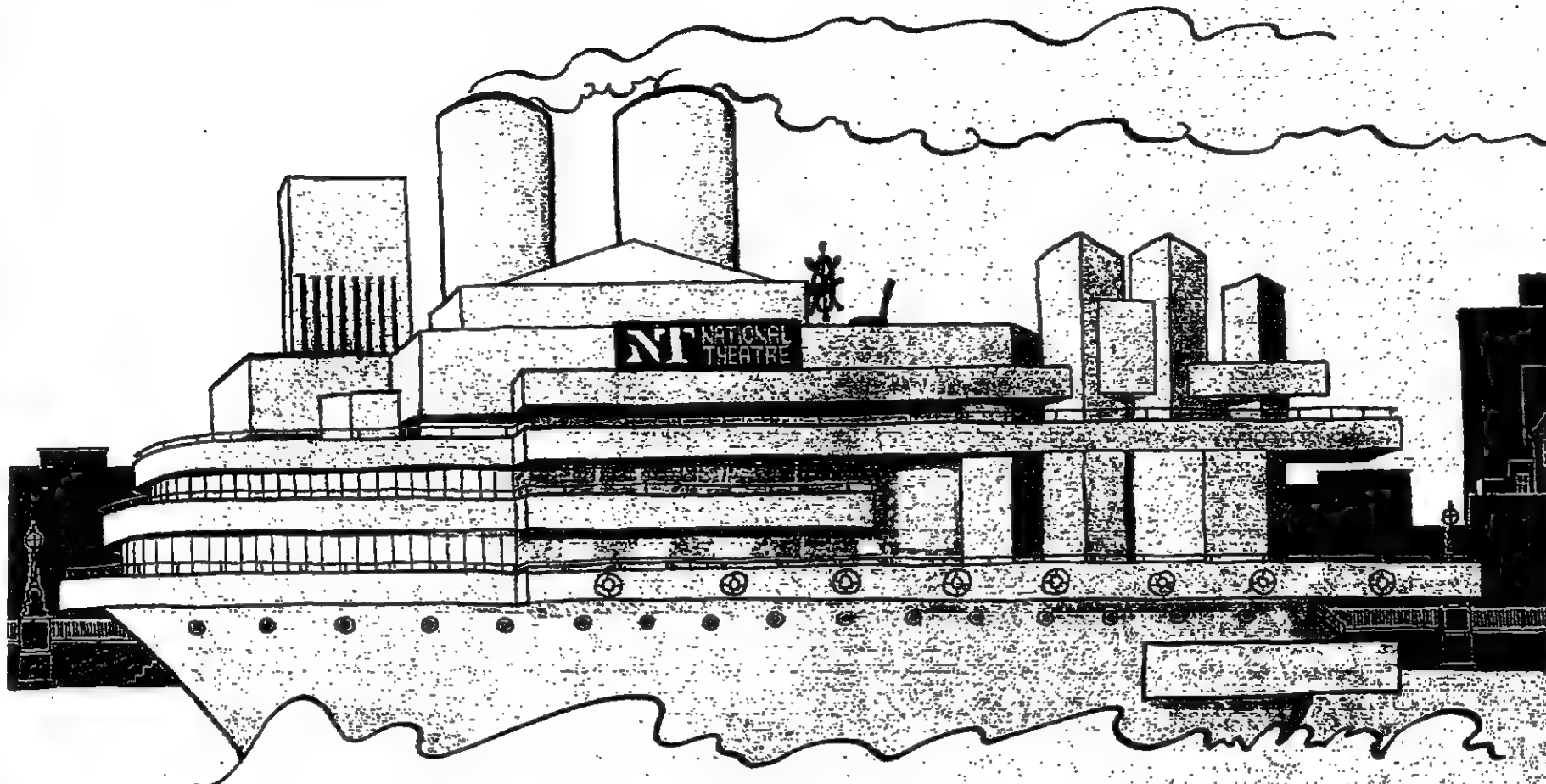
The National Theatre has variously been described as a library of living drama, a museum where work from all times and climes can be found, and a great theatrical zoo. Look, there's the long-maned Ibsen gravely prowling his cage, while Strindberg sets up an awful ontological howling nest door. Look, there's Alfred Jarry in his tree, hurling bananas at the visitors. Look at the Small Mammal House, instantly recognisable by the four-letter words and two-word sentences flying through the door.

These days, talk of libraries, museums and zoos is unfashionable. It makes the National sound too institutional. Yet it indicates what kind of theatre it is and is not, and therefore what sort of person its board should choose as the fourth artistic director in its 34-year history. The National cannot be primarily dedicated to one author, like the RSC, or one point of view, like the Berliner Ensemble. It cannot reflect one vision, like Brook's International Centre of Theatre Research, or embody one style, like Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre. Its work needs to be infinitely diverse, and therefore its director must be a person of unusual openmindedness and remarkably catholic tastes.

But that still sounds as if someone is being hired to run a dramatic V&A. Enterprise, daring and alertness to a fast-changing world are also part of the job-description. The leader of the British theatre — for that is the post on offer — must be as responsive to the new and untried as to the old and tried. One of his hands should be taking the pulse of the present while the other turns the pages of the past. He should be able to excite as well as facilitate. He should have heat in his own belly as well as the ability to fire up others.

There are other requirements, too; but these already seem enough to make the task of the search committee set up by the National's board seem pretty daunting. Will it opt for one of the people named in the poll of 60-odd leading theatre professionals recently conducted by *The Stage* — Jonathan Kent, Nicholas Hytner, Jude Kelly and, miles out in front, Sam Mendes and Stephen Daldry? Or will it beg the current director, Richard Eyre, to extend the contract that expires next year, as a justifiably flattering 10 per cent wanted? He has, after all, successfully fulfilled the job's key demands, keeping up a fine flow of representative classics and opening his doors to the likes of Robert Lepage and Theatre de Complicite. If not taking the risks on new dramatists Daldry has managed in his brief, glittering reign at the Royal Court.

No, it seems not. The word is that the committee is taking a big step



JOHN MANNING

forward into the past. Reportedly its first choice is the 56-year-old who directed a baby-faced Eyre as Seyton in an undergraduate *Macbeth* in 1962; the one who had already assumed control of the RSC by the time Peter Hall became the National's director in 1973. When the purple smoke rises from that concrete tower, and press officers emerge with joyful cries of "habemus papam", Sir Peter's throne seems likely to belong to Trevor Nunn.

That's a surprise, for he does not feature either in *The Stage* poll or the forefront of most people's minds. And it produces decidedly mixed feelings. Yes, Nunn is a brilliantly versatile director, a proven administrator and a man of great personal decency. But has he the time, commitment and fire the job needs? And has the search committee been doing everything that the importance of its task demands — or is it, as some feel, an unrepresentative body that has been passive and even lazy in its workings?

Given that there was no obvious candidate already in the wings — the case with the three previous

choices — its members needed to go out on to the theatrical highways and byways and solicit scores of views, comments and, maybe, applications. That is what happened before the RSC appointed Adrian Noble as its director, even though he was being groomed for the job. That is especially necessary now, for the seven-person committee contains not one performer. But it seems that mere pros must remain in their boxes, like chess pieces, while the grandmaster is anointed offstage.

Where the pros and pawns to speak, I suspect they would have questions to ask of Nunn. Small-scale productions of *Timon of Athens* and *Measure for Measure* recently proved he has not lost his touch as a director of classics, while *Sunset Boulevard* shows that no-body handles a large stage and cast much better. If another of the job requirements is to mix the intimate and the epic, the highbrow and the popular, and keep broadening the National's appeal, Nunn is a good candidate.

Given the skill with which he

managed an expanding RSC, he is fully capable of running three auditoriums, too. Yet here is the worry. The early 1970s were great times for Nunn and the RSC, but by the early 1980s he was increasingly an absentee landlord, visiting the Stratford tenantry when the likes of *Cats* and *Starlight Express* allowed.

Kenneth Branagh's autobiography contains a disturbingly comic description of being "Trevved": "fulsomely congratulated in 90 seconds flat ('Huuuuuuuuu enjoyable') by a chief executive who had not got round to seeing his *Henry V* until his 138th and penultimate performance."

Other members of the RSC reportedly wrote to Jimmy Saville asking if he would fix a meeting with their boss. So, if Hollywood or Andrew Lloyd Webber beckon, would the National's actors end up communicating with Nunn by fax or postcard? Certainly, the board should insist he does no outside work for three years, as it did with Eyre.

But the worry goes deeper than that. At this stage in his career Nunn has nothing to prove and, one imagines, no financial anxieties. Will he have the drive, the sheer

hunger to be a National man 24 hours a day? That is what Mendes and Daldry would bring to the job, and it is absurd to argue that this would be outbalanced by their immaturity, for at 30 and 35 they are both older than either Hall or Nunn was when they took over running the RSC.

Although Eyre is handing on a theatre in sound artistic and financial health, there will be plenty of decisions to make, problems galore, to address. How, for instance, is the National to react to the disappearance of the RSC from the Barbican each summer and the opening of the Globe just downriver? If money runs short, as it regularly does, will Nunn be an active, effective lobbyist for funds? Can you imagine him leaping on to a coffee table and publicly lambasting his paymasters, as Hall famously did?

Conversely, suppose the government allows lottery money to be used to finance productions. Will he make the National more genuinely national by expanding its touring

schedule? Will he do what now seems impossible — create a permanent ensemble of maybe 70 performers to occupy the Olivier and Cottesloe, while ad-hoc casting continues in the Lyttelton?

True, neither Mendes nor Daldry has formally applied for the job. Yet the former has not denied an interest, while canny wooing could well lure the latter from the Court. Either appointment would be greeted with excitement in the profession and, I imagine, the public at large. Mendes's directing successes have ranged from Shakespeare to Scandalmonger, from *Hamlet* to *Bohème*, and he has made the Donmar the liveliest theatre in central London. Daldry has performed wonders at the tiny Gate, the larger Court and, as anybody who saw *Macbeth* or *An Inspector Calls* will agree, the mighty Lyttelton itself.

Is the National board frightened of youth and energy? Is the talk in its committee rooms of "a safe pair of hands" and "being responsible" and "doing the wise thing"? If so, the cowards should remember an old theatrical adage: nothing is riskier than trying too hard to avoid risk.

although in *Julius Caesar*, Marc Antony (Harewood again, with great rhetorical power) had a scanty complement of friends, Romans, and countrymen to bear the funeral speech.

Nothing could be more all-American than Robert Wilson's witty, exhilarating new production of Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* at the Houston Grand Opera, which will be performed at Edinburgh next summer. Opinion will always be divided over this piece. Some find Thomson's pastiche of marches, parlour songs, and spirituals charming, and Gertrude Stein's enigmatic word play profound. For others (including me), it's a long 90 minutes, and Stein's libretto is a subtlety to the point of being risible.

Nonetheless, it is exactly the sort of modernist text that Robert Wilson was born to stage, and he has created a thrilling evening of theatre. All his trademarks are present: he begins with a cavernous, empty stage, magnificently lit, and obtrudes on to it strange, beautifully rendered fragments. And Francesco Clemente's costumes are exuberantly fantastical.

The cast sang with passion, and the Houston Grand Opera and Chorus performed splendidly for the conductor, Dennis Russell Davies.

these were evident in the Sonata Op XII by Christiane Boesch, titled *The Money Changers*, which was given its premiere.

The composer seems to have a Swiss background and London residence, and her brief programme note indicated a descriptive purpose for music "moulded in a market resounding world" and "distorted into wrath" before reaching some kind of spiritual resolution. The writing is constantly close-textured between the two players, who are fully occupied

YEATS had the notion that he should have shown his strong and mainly self to Maud Gonne when they first met, instead of his gentle and poetic self. If he had done so, passion might have blossomed between them. And, if he was right, the world might have gained another Irish revolutionary and lost the writer who went on mourning Gonne deep into old age. But poor Yeats said the wrong thing — and the relationship was doomed.

That tale would appeal to David Ives, the American author of the six playlets he calls *All in the Timing*. He enjoys playing games with potential realities and alternative time-warps. Indeed, his opening piece has a lad trying to pick up a girl in a café. Again and again he says an outpouring thing: "I don't go out much since my nervous breakdown", or very heartily, "What's a good-looking like you doing out alone on a Friday night?" Mabel Aitken, playing his target, shrinks away like Maud from W.B.

But again and again Steve Punt, playing the predator, is allowed to take a chronological back-somersault. He replaces and reinvents had time after bad time. By the end the two of them are walking off arm-in-arm to a movie and, it's suggested, a wedding. Yeats has got his Gonne.

It is a diverting little whimsy, but only once it is matched by what follows. Here, Hugh Dennis plays a New Yorker who goes into a drugstore, only to find it does not sell aspirin, and then into a deli that has run out of pastrami. He has fallen into a weird time-hole called Philadelphia, after Pennsylvania's glum chief city. Or so he is informed by Punt, who plays a friend currently stuck in a Los Angeles, meaning that he greets the loss of his wife and his job with the same laid-back Californian shrug.

Again you will be amused, but not a lot more. The flat, sloping clock upon which Hugh Wooldridge's production is set may be hinting that there is some metaphysical substance to Ives's plays, but if so, it eludes me. Mostly, he offers sub-Stoppardian conceits and post-Python doodles. *Monkeys bang away* at typewriters in a comic attempt to appease a scientist by composing *Hamlet* and *Paradise Lost*. Debra Beaumont joins Hugh Dennis in composing a new Esperanto called *Unamunda*.

Each of these has a promising moment or two, then overextends and overreaches itself. It is the same, I fear, with the one sketch that Ives has added to the programme that played successfully off-Broadway two years ago. *Degas — c'est moi* is a Walter Mitty story in which the excellent Punt performs a New Yorker who spends a day pretending he is the great Post-Impressionist, while the rest of the four-person cast are uncaring passers-by, an angry taxi-driver, a mundane wife and, for one inexplicable moment, the painter Renoir.

But at least this piece has a point to it. So-called Degas' wife trudges into the bathroom, strips off, and for a moment looks as if she might have stepped out of a canvas at the Met. Moral: the ordinary can be extraordinary if only you have the wit to see it.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Redgraves' Romans go roaming in Texas

In Houston, Jamie James watches a famous brother-and-sister act in fine form, and an operatic rarity



Vanessa Redgrave in *Antony and Cleopatra*

humours, which in lesser hands might seem showy or oddly assorted. She has a talented partner as Antony, David Harewood, who matches her passion for passion. Like all the British actors in these Alley productions, Harewood is a member of the Redgraves' London-based Moving Theatre.

While there is dignity, clarity, and some inventiveness in Corin Redgrave's direction of *Julius Caesar*, the production's focus could have been sharper. There seems to be a tentative attempt to invoke Caesar's body lies in state, Verdi's *Dies Irae* thunders and the mob throws books on to a bonfire. Likewise, there is a vague intimation of a homoerotic bond between Cassius and Brutus, but it is too timid to make its point. By play's end, the effect is one

of passionless intelligence. When Cassius declared that ages hence the play's "lofty scene" would be "acted over in states unborn and accents yet unknown", he could not have known it would be told in the accents of Texas. One approached the collaboration between the Redgraves and the Alley with trepidation; in the event the two companies blended as well as many British companies, in which one finds a mingling of Northern burrs, broad Midlands vowels and glottal stops. One decided exception was the Alley's Alex Allen Morris, whose exaggerated country drawl in the role of Enobarbus marred *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Otherwise, the acting in these productions was generally excellent. Corin Redgrave's Caesar had grandeur with just the right pinch of preening pomposity. John

Feltch's Brutus at first seemed pallid and bemused, but after Caesar's death, his performance ripened and deepened to tragic dimensions. Howard Sandler was a complex, delightfully well-spoken Cassius; he was much better in this role than his rather puny Octavius Caesar in *Antony and Cleopatra*. As usual, the Alley mounted handsome productions.

Warmth and spirit from satisfying partnership

RECITAL

Hugh/Cassard
Wigmore Hall

He had taken an assertive lead in bolstering the cheerful pretensions of Mendelssohn's Cello Sonata No 2 to open the programme, giving the cellist the opportunity to add charm to its musical historicities. More of

these were evident in the Sonata Op XII by Christiane Boesch, titled *The Money Changers*, which was given its premiere.

The composer seems to have a Swiss background and London residence, and her brief programme note indicated a descriptive purpose for music "moulded in a market resounding world" and "distorted into wrath" before reaching some kind of spiritual resolution. The writing is constantly close-textured between the two players, who are fully occupied

throughout its 12 minutes and who alternate prominence.

Both players responded warmly heartily to the romantic elegance of Brahms in his F major Cello Sonata (No 2), with well-judged dynamics in the dramatic development of the first movement, a poetic song and dialogue in the darkly broody Adagio, and a strong sense of harmonic direction and lively spirit in the rest to generate satisfaction.

NOEL GOODWIN

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DANCE

Getting round
Jerome: how the
Birmingham Royal
Ballet won the
privilege of
staging Robbins



BUILDINGS

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Another tale of two cities

Hilary Finch discovers why
concert halls in London and
Berlin are pooling programmes

At the Barbican they call it Group Dynamics; in Berlin, more cautiously, it is known simply as the Kammerorchester International. But whatever its name, this first ever twinning of two cultural flagships — the City of London's concert hall with the Konzerthaus of the former East Berlin — promises an unusual spring festival of international chamber orchestras meeting and playing all the music they like best.

The series is already under way in Berlin: they have been visited by the Academy of St Martin and Toronto's Tafelmusik. London switches in on Monday with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and the Vienna Concentus Musicus. Yuri Bashmet's Moscow Soloists play Berlin on April 18 and London two days later; on May 19 the Konzerthaus hosts the Stockholm Chamber Orchestra, which visits the Barbican on May 21.

The chamber orchestras could hardly find themselves in more strikingly different environments. The Barbican, already an architectural anachronism when it was opened in 1982, and now dazed with gilt cherubim and wall-to-wall chandeliers, finds its counterpart in a gracious neo-Palladian royal theatre, built at the start of the 19th century as part of a noble classical ensemble in the heart of Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt.

Schiller's great dramas were born in this former Schauspielhaus. Gustav Gründgens (Klaus Mann's Mephisto) was its last Intendant. Erich Honecker raised it from the ruins of war into its next incarnation: that of a much needed Konzerthaus, with its interior lovingly restored in the colours and decorative details of its original architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel.

When Professor Frank Schneider took over as the new Intendant and artistic director in 1992, his domain was a superb main hall, modelled on Vienna's Musikverein and bright with chandeliers and gilt galleries; an exquisite Kleine Saal for chamber music; and a basement Musik-Club for coffee, cabaret and contemporary music. But his problems had only just begun. The

half of the Wall had left Berlin with two cultural centres — and what the Federal Government saw as numerous examples of duplication. The Konzerthaus found itself caught up in the complex problems of cultural funding in a new capital.

With the support of a newly reformed Akademie der Künste which, since its foundation in the 17th century, has acted as a forum for debate between politicians and artists, the Konzerthaus survived, attempts to disband its resident orchestra the Berlin Symphony, and to be forced into commercial privatisation. But it would have to find ways of proving itself in an environment with no tradition of private sponsorship, and of developing a distinctive and alternative identity to the Philharmonie in the West.

Professor Schneider likes to think of the rival Philharmonie as an orchestra (the Berlin Philharmonic), and the Konzerthaus as a house with an orchestra — and rather more beside. He rejoices in the intimacy of the Konzerthaus (1,400 seats to the Philharmonie's 2,200) which makes it an ideal venue for visiting chamber ensembles; and is delighted that the Kooperationsmodell — Synergie-Effekte (sic) offered by Group Dynamics — is providing the impetus to make it possible for him to hire groups he would otherwise still find difficult to afford.

He speaks of providing a platform for the many young composers who were previously denied a voice for an annual cultural crossover production (the figure of Thomas Mann haunts him); and, above all, of "the democratic principle of hosting music from many other cultures than our own". It is projects like Group Dynamics, he feels, which offer one way forward through the thicker of new responsibilities and financial constraints, which threaten not only the Konzerthaus but Berlin's broader cultural life.

It is projects like Group Dynamics, he feels, which offer one way forward through the thicker of new responsibilities and financial constraints, which threaten not only the Konzerthaus but Berlin's broader cultural life.

How did Birmingham Royal Ballet pull off a dance coup? Nadine Meisner reports

Mr Robbins releases his Cage

The studio piano chords jabber furiously as Monica Zamora confuses her male victim. She floors him with a spectacular high kick full into his face, plunges into his soft underbelly with spikes, stabbing arms, then polishes him off with a quick swivel of his head between her knees. "You're too gentle," Desmond Kelly, Birmingham Royal Ballet's assistant director, says. "It doesn't look as though you're cracking his neck."

This is high-impact ballet, unexpected and rather shocking. The movement is angular and alien, belonging to a closed community of deadly female insect-like predators. It might have been choreographed yesterday, but in fact Jerome Robbins created *The Cage* for New York City Ballet in 1951.

Acquiring a Robbins ballet is a major achievement. He appears benign enough, a dapper 77-year-old with a white, short-clipped beard. But he has become a legend as the most elusive, most exacting individual in the business. He does not give his ballets easily, nor does he often compromise on the lengthy rehearsal times he expects.

He can afford to be difficult. At various times Broadway boogie, actor, theatre director and classical dancer, the founding choreographer of NYCB is unsurpassed among living choreographers. His first piece, *Fancy Free* (1944), was such a success that he and his composer, Leonard Bernstein, enlarged it into a musical, *On the Town*. He teamed up again with Bernstein for *West Side Story* (1957) which he conceived, directed and choreographed. He has to date created more than 50 ballets, ranging from showbiz Americana to high classicism and more or less everything in between.

For companies prepared to accede to Robbins's conditions, the rewards of staging one of his ballets are considerable. At worst, they get consummate craftsmanship, at best, a masterpiece. They also often find box-office bliss. In France, where the Paris Opera Ballet presents complete evenings of his work, his name has such pulling power that the presenters of the NYCB season last autumn at first insisted on showing just Robbins, and no works by Balanchine, the company's founder.

But Robbins is little known in Britain. Apart from London Contemporary Dance Theatre's brief run of his silent ballet *Movers*, the only company to represent him has been the Royal Ballet, with seven pieces over the years. This, though, stopped in 1988 with the final performance of Robbins's brilliant comedy *The Concert*. The Royal Ballet says that it has since been unable to match its rehearsal schedules to Robbins's availability.



Jerome Robbins was unable to take rehearsals of *The Cage* at Birmingham. But Jean-Pierre Frohlich made an equally exacting taskmaster

Ballet presents complete evenings of his work, his name has such pulling power that the presenters of the NYCB season last autumn at first insisted on showing just Robbins, and no works by Balanchine, the company's founder. But Robbins is little known in Britain. Apart from London Contemporary Dance Theatre's brief run of his silent ballet *Movers*, the only company to represent him has been the Royal Ballet, with seven pieces over the years. This, though, stopped in 1988 with the final performance of Robbins's brilliant comedy *The Concert*. The Royal Ballet says that it has since been unable to match its rehearsal schedules to Robbins's availability.

So BRB is filling the gap, becoming the first European company to mount *The Cage*: quite a coup, since it is not on the list of ballets Robbins usually hires out. Conscious of this, BRB mentioned *The Cage* only as a casual afterthought, during negotiations for another Robbins ballet, *Fancy Free* (1953), to tie in with this year's celebration of the 1950s as part of the Towards the Millennium Festival. They had to pick themselves off the ground when he agreed.

They found, however, that Robbins had not gone completely soft and was insisting on another of his famous restrictions: geographical control. Consequently you can see the ballet everywhere, except during the company's London season in May. But, as BRB's director David Bintley says: "Who cares? We've got it."

The company has escaped the full Robbins experience, since he has not been personally involved in their production. It is an absence caused by conflicting dates and not, everyone stresses, by recent pre-emptive heart surgery. His stand-in has been Jean-Pierre Frohlich, assistant ballet master with NYCB and something of a specialist in staging Robbins ballets.

Frohlich decided on the casting by gradually weeding out dancers over four days: it is, he says, the process Robbins uses with a company he does not know. What qualities did he search for? "Dancers who are very limber but who can also be muscularly tight, because they have to be both very flexible and very sharp," he says.

By other accounts, Robbins's selection procedures with unfamiliar companies can be a lot more draconian. Monica Mason, of the Royal Ballet, was in its first cast for *Dances at a Gathering*, along with Rudolf Nureyev, Lynn Seymour and Anthony Dowell. "Robbins made most of us learn most of the roles, because he wanted to see everybody doing everything and then he could pick the best," she says. "And then he didn't decide on the opening-night cast until we had done the general rehearsal the day before. It was a bit like being auditioned."

Robbins's perfectionism might be ruthless, but it protects his work in an art where detail — the precise angle of an arm, the pulse of a phrase — can quickly blur. That way, the continuum of his talent, from *Fancy Free* to his 1994 masterpiece, the limpid Bach-inspired *2 & 3 Part Inventions*, remains true. "He is one of the last geniuses," Frohlich says. Throughout our conversation, he respectfully referred to Mr Robbins, where more distant acquaintances talk of Jerry. He also said that Mr Robbins reads absolutely everything about himself. So, Mr Robbins, welcome back to Britain.

● *The Cage* opens tonight at the Birmingham Hippodrome (0121-632 7466)

ARCHITECTURE: Marcus Binney reports on how Barcelona tackled the rebuilding of a famous old opera house

Spanish lessons for La Fenice

Rebuild it just as it was, said *The Times*, striking a universal chord after fire consumed the Fenice Opera House in Venice. Yet the experience in rebuilding the Barcelona opera house, the famous Liceu, consumed by fire in January 1994, shows just how challenging such an apparently straightforward approach can be.

In Barcelona they proclaimed "as it was, so it will be". But old theatres have their faults: poor backstage facilities, seats with restricted views and acoustic blackspots. Ignasi de Sola-Morales, the

architect in charge at the Liceu, explains: "I was commissioned to do a reconstruction but I have moved towards an historical restoration of the auditorium surrounded by a completely new structure."

Richard Best of Techniplan, the London theatrical consultants who are advising him, says: "Redesign creates a new full-size sidestage at stage left. By digging down 16 metres, two other full-size sidestages

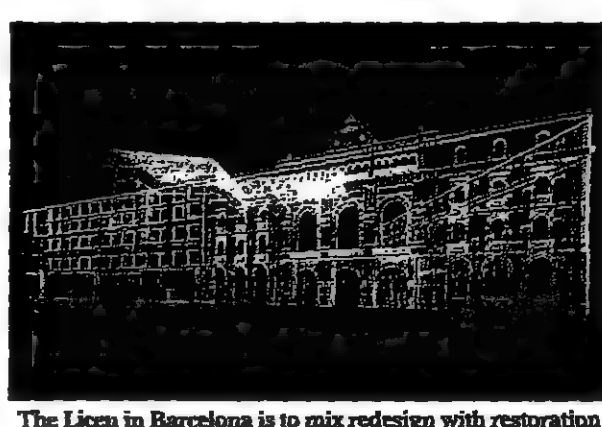
have been created below the stage for storage and rehearsals. They are getting an enlarged, fully-powered fly tower. Before it was full of timber and hemp ropes — that's one reason why it burnt so well."

"It's hard to believe, but all the scenery had to be brought in through a bookshop in the Ramblas," he says.

The Liceu, like many other historic buildings, had caught fire just as a major renovation neared completion. Built in 1847, it had burnt out once before in 1861, and was immediately reconstructed. Hauntingly, the views of the gutted interior after the two fires were almost identical, showing the horseshoe wall of the auditorium virtually intact.

"They kept it in 1861. This time they have scooped out the whole site, leaving little more than the handsome entrance block in the Ramblas where the foyers survived the fire."

Sola-Morales explains: "The Liceu had boxes on all levels, so there were hundreds of openings. After the 1861 fire they changed the boxes and moved the doorways. We needed to adjust them again."



The Liceu in Barcelona is to mix redesign with restoration

Sola-Morales explains the logic of further changes. "The boxes on the second tier were a disaster: bad views and poor acoustics. Now there will be open rows of seats and this will be one of the best places to sit."

The boxes closest to the proscenium arch are angled back to the audience, so only half the stage is visible. "Yet they are a favourite place for many people," says Sola-Morales. And now there is talk of resiting the royal box from the centre to the side, to provide better access.

Despite the ferocity of the fire a lot of detail was salvaged. Sola-Morales points to a row of cast-iron seats in the corridor outside his office. "People said that I wouldn't find the craftsmen. But they exist and we will have models done to check the quality of every element."

More contentious is the treatment of the auditorium ceiling, a ravishing composition of gilt ornamental plasterwork inset with painted canvases. "It is one thing to reproduce ornaments, another to copy paintings; the results can be quite kitsch," says Sola-Morales.

Besides, the roof of the auditorium is one of the most technical areas of a contemporary opera house. To provide the best, we need four lighting

bridges. These, of course, change the character of the ceiling and, he concedes, "this is the part the conservatives most dislike".

Rob Harris of Arup Acoustics, who is advising the Spanish acoustic engineers, says: "The trick is to make the lighting bridge fulfil both an acoustic and a structural function. By tilting the ceiling above we can get better distribution of sound to the boxes."

Insurance is a crucial factor

Right royal opera



THE Royal Opera's Ring cycle, conducted by Bernard Haitink and directed by Richard Jones, with designs by Nigel Lowrey, reached new heights with *Siegfried* last autumn. Now Wagner's story continues, with *Götterdämmerung*. Anne Evans, a superb Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, sings the role for the first time in this production, while Wolfgang Fasler makes his debut as Siegfried.

Theatre Club members can buy two tickets (normally £29 to £140) for the price of one for the performances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on Saturday (4pm), conducted by Haitink, and next Tuesday (4.30pm), conducted by Jun Märkl. To book, telephone 0171-304 4000 and quote the reference GOTT

GLASGOW: Theatre Royal Mar 7 ● CLUB members are invited to the opening night of Scottish Ballet's spring season, a double bill featuring *La Sylphide* and the world premiere of *A Fond Kiss*, a new one-act ballet set to music by Stravinsky, by the company's resident choreographer, Mark Baldwin. Two stalls tickets for the price of one (normally £10 to £21). Tel 0141-332 9000

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May 13: Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham. Tickets normally £13 to £16. Tel 0121-643 1231
May 26: Sadler's Wells, London. Tickets normally £7.50 to £22.50. Tel 0171-713 6000
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The Finance Director of a major international money broker needs an experienced well-organised secretary. This is an unpressured job, the atmosphere's friendly, professional and having your own spacious office in a stunning building is an added bonus. Essential - 90 wpm, good communication skills and ability to cope with peaks and troughs in your workload. Age 25-34.

PA/OFFICE MANAGER
£14,000 E.C.3

Delightful, young professional property advisors need 'Miss Money' to ensure everything's under control and the office runs smoothly. You'll also need fast media typing. Age 21+.

PLEASE CALL 0171 373 7779

JIGSAW
RECRUITMENT

SECRETARY/PA
Circa £19,000 + Benefits

Secretary/PA required for leading group building group. Ideal candidate must be efficient and flexible and have good organisational skills, telephone manner and ability to use initiative. Word processing, basic publishing and online typing. (Ample & Lotus 123)

No answer preferred
Apply in writing together with CV to Box No 4041

SECRETARY/ OFFICE MANAGER

Immediate vacancy in a leading property company. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office.

Call 0171 488 9922 Fax 0171 762 3331
City Recruitment

RECEPTIONIST/TELEPHONIST
£15,000 p.a. package

Well spoken, immediately presented receptionist to work for a leading company. Must have excellent presentation skills and be able to handle a high volume of calls. 8:30am to 5:30pm. Call Wendy, La Creme Cons, 0171 240 4538.

PUBLIC RELATIONS
PA - £15K - 17K

We have two fabulous opportunities for ambitious and multi-talented PAs. Working at senior level the roles will appeal to proactive individuals with the necessary to handle confidential work and demanding clients. Experience of General Office Management and Personal Duties would be very helpful.

Please call Michelle Cooke or Emma Dale
For other media related temporary roles within these fields please call Jan Williams.

A Division of Graduate Appointments.

RECRUITMENT & TEMPORARY

Call 0171 373 6233
Fax 0171 373 6115
7a Leinster Street
London WC2E 9JA

POSITIVE ACTION

AN ORGANISER'S DREAM
Admin/Secretary Top Merchant Bank £18K + Benefits

Are you looking for your second job (aged 18-28) and are happy juggling six balls in the air at the same time. This Top Merchant Bank is looking to recruit a young secretary who has both the confidence and ability to help organise Roadshows. If involvement, variety and a fast pace is what you are looking for - look no further. Minimum typing is 60 wpm, as is a steady CV.

INTERVIEWING IN THE DOCKLANDS FOR CITY JOBS - THURS 29TH FEBRUARY 1996

You are presently working in the Docklands and want to find out more about permanent and temporary opportunities throughout London? If you are interested in having an informal chat with our consultants, give us a call now.

THE CREAM OF TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
£340.00+pw

We need someone with an outgoing personality & plenty of get up and go to join one of the world's largest of companies. This is an ongoing position available immediately if you've got 60wpm WordPerfect for Windows, Freedom & Lotus 123. Superb benefits apply including a free restaurant.

SHORTHAND PA
£340.00+pw

Try this position on for size temporarily before you decide if you like it enough to stay! This international firm of diamond traders have immaculate offices where you'll need at least 80wpm shorthand, 60wpm WPM, PowerPoint & Excel.

SENIOR PAs
£340.00+pw

Several projects have produced a need for PAs on long & short term assignments at an international communication company. An adventurous personality is vital in addition to 60wpm Applications, PowerPoint & Excel.

Call LIZ, LEE OR JANE on 0171 430 2531
115 High Holborn, London WC1

Office Angels

We are recruiting on behalf of the World's No.1 Brand

As Information Systems Administrator, you will provide administrative & secretarial support to the IS team. Responsible for activity reporting on projects, you will monitor department expenses, co-ordinate purchase of IT equipment & projects. In addition to diary management, you will be easy going, confident, highly motivated and able to use your initiative and have excellent knowledge of Microsoft Office Professional Tools. 'A' level/equivalent in Computing preferred. Excellent salary & benefits.

0171-831-1220

RECRUITMENT & COMPANY
5 GARRICK STREET WC2E 9AR

PA with Pizzazz
£16,000 p.a.

Looking after the Vice President's business in the Property World who really appreciates being well-served. PA, Publishing, 20% well-organised, versatile, confident, well-presented people who enjoy being the first point of contact for the Vice President. You will have a good typing to clear the day and get on with it. Please send your CV to: 0171 588 8887

Media Moves!
£14,000 p.a.

We have four exciting opportunities in the Media World. PA, Publishing, 20% well-organised, versatile, confident, well-presented people who enjoy being the first point of contact for the Vice President. You will have a good typing to clear the day and get on with it. Please send your CV to: 0171 588 8887

LAURA ASHLEY

Laura Ashley, the highly renowned design and retailing company has recently relocated its offices to Fulham, London and as a result now has a number of vacancies for

Exceptional Personal Assistants

Working alongside our Senior Directors you will have the opportunity to contribute to the future success of Laura Ashley. Naturally, you will have outstanding secretarial skills gained from previous senior level appointments; in addition you will possess confidence, dedication, flexibility and an outstanding desire to succeed in a busy, demanding environment.

Receptionists

First impressions are important. Working as part of this lively Office Services team you will demonstrate a professional, confident and helpful manner to your clients, both internal and external. You should also be proficient at managing a busy Manager Switchboard and must be able to juggle a number of tasks at any one time. Experience in a similar environment would be an advantage.

In return you can expect a competitive salary and excellent benefits package together with the opportunity of joining our organisation at an exciting and challenging time.

If you are interested and feel you have the necessary skills please write enclosing your current curriculum vitae and salary details to: Liz Atterley, Laura Ashley Ltd, 150 Bath Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 4YS by no later than Thursday 7th March 1996. Please ensure you provide a daytime telephone contact number. Interviews will be held on Wednesday 13th March at our offices in Fulham.

Commercial Manager, Philips Consumer Communications
Up to £25k
Thames Valley Area

Philips Consumer Communications is a brand new division and part of a major global investment in telecommunications, presenting the ideal opportunity to develop your career with the company.

As part of this new venture, you'll be acting as the principal assistant to the Managing Director, dealing with all establishment and personnel issues, organising meetings and liaising with managers, clients and staff.

Senior Secretary/PA
CD-i Professional Activity
Croydon

Philips Consumer Electronics, part of our multi-national business, is currently expanding into a wide range of new and exciting areas.

Based at Philips Head Office and part of a five strong team, you'll be responsible for general secretarial activities, managing publicity, organising travel and acting as a point of contact for clients.

For either position you should be of graduate calibre with at least two years' secretarial experience, excellent typing skills (60 wpm), working knowledge of Excel, good telephone manner and the ability to act on your own initiative. Ongoing and independent, ideally you'll have some language skills and be keen to succeed and progress. Opportunities to develop into commercial roles within the Philips group are excellent.

To apply, please send your CV with a covering letter quoting your current salary to Jane Booth, Rife Consultancy, 4 Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, London EC4A 3BN, quoting reference 428 for the Commercial Manager and 429 for the Senior Secretary/PA position.

Closing date for applications: 15th March 1996.

Let's make things better
PHILIPS

P.A. TO EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT MANAGER

The Ritz is a 130 bedroom hotel with 235 staff located in the heart of London. We are currently looking for a well-presented P.A. to work in a busy environment for our Deputy General Manager. You will be responsible for providing full secretarial and administrative support and ensuring that the office functions smoothly. A committed, organised approach is vital, as is the ability to think ahead and cope under pressure.

The ideal candidate will have good typing skills and be familiar with Word for Windows 6.0. A knowledge of how hotels operate would be an advantage but not essential.

We will offer a competitive salary and a generous benefits package to the successful candidate.

Please send your CV in the first instance to Linda Sinclair, Personnel Manager, The Ritz, 150 Piccadilly, London W1Y 9DG. Telephone (0171) 493 8181 or Fax (0171) 629 7751

Inference

M4 Corridor
Senior PA/Office Manager

Inference Corporation is established in developing sophisticated leading edge technology for solving real-world business problems.

This prestigious software house in Berkshire requires a mature, organised Senior PA with management capabilities to become involved in an extremely high profile role which includes Office Management responsibilities. Self-motivated business women and a minimum of two years' experience in a similar role are key attributes to the position. An awareness of software technology is essential with the desire to work for a top, expanding international organisation.

BUCKS & BERKS

RECRUITMENT PLC
Angle Knapp on 01753 554455
Fax: 01753 521554

SHEILA CHILDS RECRUITMENT

£30,000 International Investment Bank, West End - Chairman needs key person with financial experience and cheerful disposition. Excellent skills. Age 30-45

£28,000 Global Media Company - High profile, fast-moving, exhilarating role for exceptional young PA. Age 20-28

£26,000 World-famous Retail Group - Highly-organised, bright PA with an eye for style for newly-appointed head Director. Excellent skills. Age 25-30

4 Ganton Street, London W1
Telephone: 0171 437 3111 Fax: 0171 437 4050

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (Circa ?)

Working within a superbly refurbished Georgian building located in Brighton the ideal candidate aged 30-40 will be degree qualified, dynamic, intelligent, secretarial skills and familiar with multi-national environments, PR/marketing background preferred. The group specialises in the supply of IT Human Resource consultancy with offices in UK, USA and Australia. With a T/O of £250m, the group's expansive plans are an ideal platform for career progression for the right candidate. Salary in line with experience for this key role within the group. Forward your CV quoting ref. no. GL35 to EuroLink Group Plc, Blenheim House, 56 Old Steine, Brighton BN1 1NH. Tel: 01273 202316 Fax: 01273 205614

SECRETARIAL TEMPS
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

Package To £26,000 + Co Car Scheme

Ritz Recruitment is a privately owned recruitment organisation which has developed a first class reputation in the secretarial/PA/deral market. Our success in 1995 has surpassed all expectations and we therefore have a need to recruit additional consultants.

The ideal applicant will have a minimum of 12 months agency experience and be keen to forge a career in a young progressive environment where talent and ideas are encouraged. With highly trained customer service abilities and a clear understanding of sales, your brief will be to expand one of our highly successful desks. To assist you, you will be able to take advantage of our fully computerised recruitment system and one of the best advertising profiles in the industry.

In addition to a high basic salary you will receive a generous bonus system plus the opportunity to gain a fully expensed company car.

Contact Catherine Delaney or Colin Bush on 0171 629 4343 or fax a copy of your CV to fax 0171 491 2972. Evening/Weekend contact see 01582 492659.

MAJOR WEST END HEAD OFFICE
PA/SEC £20,000

Operating in 30+ countries, this well known British Group need a skilled PA/Sec to assist their Group Treasurer and Taxation and Insurance Offices.

Very varied work with lots of admin and travel arrangements. PA/Sec skills must include Word 6, Lotus Excel and PowerPoint.

COVENT GARDEN BUREAU
8 MADDOX STREET LONDON W1P 9PN

Telephone 0171 485 8822

Reception/ Secretary
£15,000 - £16,500

We are currently recruiting experienced Receptionists on behalf of clients, located in the City & West End. They require well presented, friendly, professional people who have previously worked in a corporate environment. Each position requires a degree of secretarial & admin support in addition to receiving calls. Would suit if you enjoy being on the "front line" & have confidence in your skills.

0171-831-1220

RECRUITMENT & COMPANY
5 GARRICK STREET WC2E 9AR

CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

APPOINTMENTS Bi~LANGUAGE

(NON-LANGUAGE)
PUBLIC RELATIONS

£16,000

A "Hands On" role for a secretary with at least one year's experience. (30 wpm & expert Word & Windows essential). Dynamic & fast moving team environment. Scope for real involvement.

Private Banking
SPANISH CZEK & BANKING BENS

A real career move for the right person. High level of responsibility. You must be fluent in Spanish/Czech, energetic, with excellent interpersonal and administrative skills. It is an opportunity to learn the ropes and get involved in all areas of private banking. Previous banking exp. reqd.

FRENCH
BANKING £18K

An interesting and varied role for a "hands on" secretary with excellent skills (30 wpm & expert Word & Windows). To work in very prestigious international bank. Banking exp essential and some French useful. Ongoing and proactive approach essential.

JAPANESE
£14-£18,000

The client is looking for a highly motivated & energetic Japanese to be at the point of contact between clients in Japan and the UK. Excellent opportunity for a long term career. 30 wpm typing essential.

FRENCH OR SPANISH
(GRADUATE SALES EXECUTIVE)

This major publishing house is looking for two graduate sales executives to work on a new art publication. Good salary plus good commission. Excellent prospect.

ANY LANGUAGE
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGERS

EXCELLENT

Permanent management positions gained in customer service. An exciting future role with real prospect to make a career in the travel industry. Full training provided.

3 Princess Street, London W1R 7BA
Tel: 0171 734 3300/0171 355 1975 Fax: 0171 499 8588

PA to the Head of
Community Care

£16,000 - Performance Related Bonus

You will join a highly professional and busy team providing support to the Senior Managers of the Social Services Department. As Personal Assistant to the Head of Community Care, you will provide first-class secretarial support as well as assisting with a range of other projects. Working to the principles of customer care you will deal with enquiries from members of the public, Councilors and staff at all levels.

Excellent organisational and communication skills are essential as is the ability to work to tight deadlines without compromising quality. You will need a calm and flexible approach, have at least three years' relevant experience and be proficient in using Word for Windows, have a typing speed of 60 wpm, plus audio and minute taking ability. You should also be computer literate.

For an information pack, please telephone 0171-937 8144 (24-hour answerphone) quoting Ref: B002. The closing date for receipt of applications is 13 March 1996.



An equal opportunity employer.

OUTSTANDING
BANKING
OPPORTUNITIES

£25K Package

Our client leads the market in the provision of expert specialist advice in the areas of Corporate Finance and Mergers and Acquisitions. We are looking for exceptional individuals to join this dynamic and successful team to provide secretarial support including presentation work of the highest standard, as demanded by their high profile clients. Work based in beautiful office surroundings, the combination of your senior level experience within Corporate Finance and your commitment, energy and enthusiasm will be rewarded with outstanding opportunities for financial reward. Short hand desirable, excellent typing essential. Please call us now on

0171-814 0800

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

Angela Mortimer

£25,000 - Personal PA

Our client is the wife of a prominent businessman whose work and interests span across many countries. She needs a Personal Secretary to help run their private residence in this country and abroad and assist plan social activities. You will be working within a home environment in central London. Excellent secretarial skills (Shorthand and Windows) are a must as is attention to detail. Age 30-40. Please send curriculum vitae to: New Road Street, London W1Y 9HD.

0171 629 9323

DIRECTORS' SECRETARIES

WP/AUDIO SECRETARY

Required for Associate and team in City based firm of Chartered Surveyors with good skills and experience of WP 64W and Excel. The ideal candidate will be well organised with a sound knowledge of English, together with a good telephone manner, the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.

Salary £15,000

Please send your CV with covering letter to: Morag Siddall, Hummers, 45 Ludgate Hill, London EC4M 7JU. NO AGENCIES

MATURE PA FOR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

£26K + Excellent Package

The Chief Executive of an international science and technology company which is one of the market leaders in its field is looking for a PA who is well established at senior level. This is a demanding role requiring the ability to manage a complex diary, the majority of his correspondence and to take decisions on his behalf.

The written management work as a close-knit team and it is important that the successful applicant is strong on interpersonal as well as organisational skills and is comfortable with a high profile role. Short hand useful/60wpm typing. Please call now on:

0171 814 0800

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

Angela Mortimer

SECRETARIAL
TEMPS

We are looking to recruit professional experienced PA's/Secretaries to fill long and short term assignments for our continually expanding client base.

Current Vacancies

Head of Global Markets department requires Senior PA, with good shorthand, lots of telephone contact. Busy environment requires calm, collected approach. Six week assignment.

Pro-active, organised PA is required for outgoing Director of Personnel covering maternity leave for 3-4 months. MS Word is essential as is the ability to liaise at all levels.

Presentations Department of prestigious EC4 Bank requires DTP secretary who would like to use their designing skills. PowerPoint/Lotus Freelance Graphics/Page maker and fast accurate typing are essential. Immediate start.

Our PR client is looking for an enthusiastic, energetic PA who would like a "fun" assignment for the next four weeks. Must have an interest in news and current affairs.

For further information call Trishia Brown or Sarah Morris on 0171 437 9411. Centre Point Agcy.

PA ADMINISTRATOR

£18,000 + FREE TRAVEL, GYM + LUNCHES

Absolutely charming dynamic banker in his early 30's seeks a highly educated P.A. who has experience working in a pressured financial environment and who has a good work record. You will prepare and attend presentations and seminars, and liaise with senior personnel in London's leading banks. As the first line of defence, you'll be relied upon for your judgement, diplomacy, and tact. This is a superb opportunity for an intelligent and professional PA to realise their abilities in a challenging and involved role. Age 25 yrs + and min 'A' level educated.

For further information and an interview please contact Erika or Sophie on 0171-480-7306 or by fax on 0171-480-3467 at A Appointments (Rec Cons).

PA/TEAM SECRETARY

£15,000 + Benefits

Harrow-on-the-Hill

Mercuri Urval is a well-known, international, Human Resources consultancy providing support to a broad spectrum of companies at senior levels.

We are searching for a very special person. Working for 2 or 3 consultants in this busy office of 30 people, this interesting and demanding position requires the ability to work under pressure and show initiative. As well as:

remaining calm at all times, you will need to be well organised and self-disciplined. It is essential you have the confidence to learn to administer psychometric tests to a wide variety of candidates. You must have Windows and Spreadsheet skills and audiology typing speeds of at least 60 wpm. It is unlikely that you will succeed unless educated to A level standard.

Please write, enclosing a full CV, to: Mercuri Urval, Spencer House, 28 Grove Hill Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2RN. Tel: 0181 863 8465, Fax: 0181 861 1978, e-mail: mercuri@urval.co.uk

Mercuri Urval

FACILITIES/
OFFICE
MANAGER

To £25,000

Excellent stand alone role for an experienced Administrator with excellent organisational skills, responsible for the management of phone systems, supplier organisation, on floor trouble shooting and client management. 45 wpm typ. req.

INSIGHT
RECRUITMENT

59 Station St. WCH 9HE
TEL 0171 379 5179
FAX 0171 379 1263

PA TO FINANCIAL DIRECTOR
BASED IN HOLBORN EC1

Paracelus UK Limited owns and operates private acute care hospitals located in the London area and is part of an international healthcare group based in Germany.

The UK head office will shortly be relocating to new premises in central London. The Financial Director seeks an experienced and competent secretary/PA with excellent typing skills and a thorough knowledge of Word for Windows Version 6.0 and Microsoft Office.

An ideal opportunity for an enthusiastic person to demonstrate their skills as an organising secretarial support services in a new environment. A competitive salary and benefits package include profit related pay, contributory pension scheme and private health insurance is offered.

Please apply in writing with CV to:

Mrs Lynne Turner
Paracelus UK Limited
Hill Place House
58 High Street
Wimbledon
London SW19 5BA
NO AGENCIES

Office
Administrator

Excellent Salary + Bens

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a proactive, A-Level calibre, experienced administrator to work for a leading international leisure group. You will be responsible for a wide variety of office administration which will include health and safety procedures, negotiating with external suppliers and vendors and implementing effective office practice policies. Must be a team player and a strong communicator. Windows package essential. Minimum 3 years experience. Please call Jane Shepherd on 0171 437 6032.

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

HOBSTONES

Marketing PA
£20,000 + Exc Bens

International Investment Bank based in Victoria are looking for a PA/Coordinator to assist their Marketing department. Good presentation skills will be used to the full - using powerpoint and windows. If you are 25-35yrs, well presented and at ease talking with clients, ideally with finance experience, please call Emma Robinson in the West End.

Simply The Best!
£18,000 + o/t + gym
+ exc bens

Join this firm of globally renowned management consultants and you will know you are working for the best. Based in fantastic offices, you will provide senior level support, become the focal point for clients & undertake ad hoc projects. Min of 5 GCSEs, 60wpm & windows exp required. Age 27-35. Please call Isabel in the West End.

West End: 0171 437 6032

Victory House, 99 - 101 Regent Street, London W1R 7HL

RECRUITMENT

Senior Team Secretary
£18,000

Are you a team secretary working in a financial environment and eager for a career move? If so this prestigious and friendly City organisation would love to meet you. Essential skills are a Windows package, 50wpm and excellent communication skills. Please call Anabel in the City.

Team Administrator
to £17,000

A fantastic opportunity for an administration secretary with at least 2 years experience to get involved in a leading Management Consultancy firm. Duties will include interfacing with clients, producing presentations, research and administration. Word for Windows and 50 wpm essential. Please call Sarah in the City.

City: 0171 377 9919

29 Sun Street, London EC2M 2PS

HOBSTONES

ENTHUSIASTIC?
QUICK WITTED?
DECISIVE?
ABLE TO SELL?
Then team as a Temp Controller in this busy Emp. Agcy run by 100s of office exp. pros and a desire to succeed. Call Vanessa, Sunmills Mills, Putney, London SW15 2NF. 0171 242 3276

P.A. to M.D.
Required for City-based property developers. Must be articulate and self-motivated with strong administrative and organisational skills. Experience of Apple Mac, Excel and Windows essential. Only those with minimum of 3 years experience need apply. Salary around £16-17K, negotiable pending qualifications. CVs to Mr M.N. Sordahl 109 Farnborough Road, London EC1R 3ST.

HOBSTONES

Legal Float
£18-£20,000

Are you a legal secretary looking to widen your current experience and keen to find a new challenge? Hobstones are currently recruiting for one of the top City law firms and would like to hear from you if you have 65wpm typing and a Windows package. Please call Sarah Dale on 0171 377 9919.

LEGAL RECRUITMENT

H.R. ADMINISTRATOR
£16-18,000 + Full Bank Bens

A bright spark is needed by one of the leading global investment bank's personnel divisions. A fabulous opportunity for a young secretary to branch out and build a career in Personnel. You will be dealing with queries, trouble shooting and providing full admin support. The ability to think on your feet and superb communication skills are essential. Typing 50wpm. Call Emily Aldrich.

Telephone: 0171 588 8999

Aldrich & Co Ltd

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

THE DEAL MAKERS
£21,000 + Full Bank Bens

Join one of leading investment banks Structured Finance team and be responsible for running the administration for the deals. A lively and young - highly professional environment. Prepare graphical presentations for clients, co ordinate the meetings and road shows. City experience would be extremely useful. Must be well educated, resilient and have superb communication skills. Call Sarah Turnbull.

Fax: 0171 588 8996

Aldrich & Co Ltd

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

ALDRICH THE TEAM
TO TEMP WITH!

We have lots of temporary vacancies for capable secretaries to work for some of the City's best known institutions. You will need excellent speeds and a confident knowledge of up-to-date systems a flexible and a totally professional approach. We offer a great service and well paid, interesting assignments - often long term. Call Kim St. John.

Telephone: 0171 588 8999

Aldrich & Co Ltd

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

TEMPS CONTROLLER
£Excellent Package

Aldrich & Co are expanding. We are currently looking to recruit a Temps Controller to join our already highly successful team, based in the heart of the City, recruiting for leading financial institutions in London.

Call Kim St. John or Emily Aldrich for a confidential chat or send your c.v. to 121 Salisbury House, Finsbury Circus, London, EC2M 5SQ

Fax: 0171 588 8996

Aldrich & Co Ltd

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

THE ASSOCIATION OF CORPORATE
TREASURERS
JUNIOR CONFERENCE
ASSISTANT

The Association of Corporate Treasurers is a professional body which promotes the study and practice of treasury management by organising a series of events for its members.

The Position: Providing secretarial and administrative support to a Junior Conference Team, including organising, data handling, telephone enquiries, and dealing with bookings and invoices.

The Person: The successful candidate will be a young person eager to learn about event organisation, and will be well educated, meticulous in their attention to detail and have the ability to deal with enquiries. Previous experience of Microsoft Word and Excel preferred but not essential.

Salary negotiable. To apply, please send your curriculum vitae with a hand-written covering letter stating your current salary to: The Conference Manager (code CA96), The Association of Corporate Treasurers, 12 Davenport Court, London WC2R 3JL. Applications must be received by 28 February 1996.

£16,000 ONE YEAR'S
EXPERIENCE!

Join the Corporate Development/Marketing Dept of an international firm involved in leisure, construction & engineering & assist the New Business Manager with projects (you'll be designated as much as you can handle). Only 30% typing & extensive contact with your 10 Representative offices & Top Executives in the Far East & USA. Good education. (Graduates welcome) & WP/Sec skills essential for this super opportunity.

HODGE RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS
0171 629 8863

SECRETARIES
£14-16K

Prestigious company, terrific offers, fantastic perks, and jobs exp 30-35. TIP TOP WP OP £20K + perks: Adv WPG 14W, Powerpoint or Freelance, MS Office, Typing 60 wpm. HUMAN RESOURCES £12K + FPP

1-day Newbury, 3-day Casual London, fully P.D. and flexi exp. Nicky 0171 267 3391 (FR AG)

CVs to Tracy Carr 17 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB. No agencies

PEOPLE PERSON? to £18K
Do you enjoy a hectic pace? Are you a strong team player with good interpersonal skills? Do you have experience in WP64 & job take a team role - PA to the MD? 11 years experience & 2 years experience required. Call Les Franks at 0171 408 0424.

P.A. to the
Managing Director

We are Britain's leading telephone fundraising and marketing agency working for charities, universities and non-profits. The demanding role within a dynamic, expanding company requires an individual with energy, experience, initiative and resourcefulness. The successful candidate will display a high level of organisational skills, and a proven track record of senior management level. Formal shorthand, audio typing, and familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint are pre-requisites of the job.

Please send CV and covering letter to Simon Pelt, Pelt & Bates Ltd, 91/93 Farnborough Road, London EC1M 3LB

Closing date for applications 15th March

No agencies/previous applicants need not apply.

SECRETARY/PA
£25,000 - £29,000

Is there anybody out there who is London based, a non-smoker and who wants to work as a member of a happy team in a small brokerage firm in the Holborn Circus area?

I need somebody who is good natured with total integrity, completely trustworthy and educated to 'A' level standard. Good track record essential. Word for Windows, numeracy, Pitman S/H 100wpm required. Aged 26-36.

Please phone me on: 0171 404 3111

NO AGENCIES

PA/Secretary to the
Managing Director

Our client is one of the most popular media companies worldwide.

You'll play a part in their continued success, providing secretarial and PA support to the Managing Director, arranging all UK and overseas travel, organising conference calls, and maintaining diaries and filing systems.

With a mature, flexible and approachable personality, you'll need to have good shorthand skills and have worked on AppleMac. Advanced Excel and Powerpoint.

Possessing excellent communication skills, you'll deal with written and telephone queries and have the ability to prioritise your workload when under pressure. Highly numerate, with an eye for detail, you'll be happy to work extra hours when needed.

The salary and benefits are excellent, reflecting the importance of this role to our client.

Please write, in confidence, with full career and salary details quoting ref. R1241 to Paul Wilcock, MSL Advertising Services Limited, 32 Aybrook Street, London W1M 3JL.



Executive Secretary/
Administrator

Required to work in a busy PR/Marketing Consultancy in West End area. Varied role. You will need to possess a good telephone manner to liaise with important clients, be flexible enough to meet the changing requirements of the working environment and have a friendly and outgoing personality. Good audio and copy typing skills essential. Microsoft Word for Windows needed. Knowledge of Sage accounts package an advantage. Salary negotiable.

Please Reply to Box No 4049

SECRETARY

Single, cheerful secretary sought for busy team of Executive Search Consultants. Must be a team player, have excellent telephone manner & be a fast typist. Duties include typing, research, admin, diary management & customer liaison. Short presentation, excellent organisational skills & PC literacy essential.

CVs to Tracy Carr 17 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB. No agencies

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CVs to Tracy Carr 17 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB. No agencies

confidence in both camps. It becomes, in quick time, a crisis of leadership. It provides the most brutal possible examination of Carling and Atherton. Their decision-making, and their individual contributions, will come under ferocious scrutiny this weekend. But how can we scrutinise Rowe and Millingworth? It is not possible. That is their strength.

The drummajor of captain and manager is supposed to be proud of sharing. With some countries, it clearly works. Leadership is a matter of power and responsibility. With England teams, the division of labour is clear: these managers have power without the annoying distractions of responsibility, while their poor captains have responsibility without power.

Hall offer greatest threat to Downing

Emmanuel
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Irish put faith in Imperial Call for emotional success

Sutherland prospects for gold

By OUR IRISH RACING CORRESPONDENT

Fergie Sutherland is a colourful character, but he will not thank you for saying it. Any man who can dismiss having a leg blown off in a landmine blast during the Korean war as 'just part of the job' is never going to be guilty of blowing his own trumpet.

Such understatement is partly why Sutherland is one of the most instantly recognisable and likeable figures in Irish National Hunt racing.

Only partly because the 64-year-old also embodies much of the humour, amiability and sheer brio that characterises Irish racing.

Should Imperial Call emerge from Sutherland's four-horse yard in County



Sutherland greets Imperial Call and jockey, Conor O'Dwyer, after their impressive Leopardstown victory

Nap: KING'S GOLD (5.00 Taunton)
Next best: Sudden Spin (4.50 Wetherby)

Cook and fulfil his potential in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, there will rarely have been a more popular Festival victory.

There is enormous goodwill for him and his horse, a not insubstantial fact considering he is not even Irish. That much is obvious the moment he speaks. The well-modulated tones are so deep he makes Paul Robeson sound like a choir boy.

Sutherland was brought up in Peebles in the Border Country, where horses were always destined to play a large part in his life. "I was always riding ponies and I seemed to have a talent for it. My father thought I should capitalise on that gift and during the summers I was sent to a riding school in Portlough in Somerset where I spent six happy years. One day I was sent to a riding school in Portlough in Somerset where I spent six happy years. One day I was sent to a riding school in Portlough in Somerset where I spent six happy years.

After studying at Eton, Sutherland's first season in 1938 was very successful and included a Royal Ascot winner, but over the next few years he found his heart was not really in it.

"I'm more a horseman than a racegoer and I have always liked putting jumpers together. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Newmarket and have

good friends there still but my mother had this place in Cork and I moved there 33 years ago. He has never left and, in an area where hunting and point-to-pointing is a religion, he found his spiritual home.

Sutherland modestly describes himself as a horseman. Four years ago, when Lisselawn Farm, a 750-acre operation based only 30 miles from Sutherland's yard and owned by a Channel Island-based investment company, gave Sutherland £20,000 to buy a jumper, the company chose the right man.

Tom Costello is a great friend of mine and he showed me this three-year-old called Imperial Call. Even then everything he did was so athletic. He is definitely a bit special. He has so many gears, so much class. Until he won the Hennessy at Leopardstown he was only playing at racing," he said.

Imperial Call will not be playing against One Man at Cheltenham, but Sutherland takes over his sad predictions.

"Let Gordon Richards worry about One Man and I will worry about mine. A lot of people say Imperial Call must have soft ground, which is nonsense. He won by 20 lengths at Leopardstown one day and it was rock hard. As for the mistake at the last in the Hennessy, he only went two or three inches through the top of it. Twenty-five years ago, every horse and jockey landed over a fence like that."

If anybody is qualified to make such a statement it is Fergie Sutherland.

Well, they say assistant but I was really a pupil. At Newmarket Sutherland became friendly with Never Say Die's trainer, Joe Lawson. "He retired in 1957. He was an old gent by then, but we got on very well. He suggested I take over his horses and when my father bought Cariburg Stables (where Clive Brittain now trains) I was given a good start."

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NOTTINGHAM

THUNDERER
2.15 Court Nap. 2.45 Eminent Equine. 3.15 Melway. 3.45 Dream Ride. 4.15 Storming Run. 4.45 PENROSE LAD (nap). 5.15 Celtic Park.

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 3.45 INDEFENSE.

GOING: GOOD, GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES (CHASE COURSE), GOOD TO SOFT, SOFT IN PLACES (HURDLES)

7AM INSPECTION

2.15 ROYAL GAIT JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (22.55; 2m 110y) (15 runners)

1. 4914 COURT NAP (5) (J) 11-14. Chas Webb (5) 30
2. 12 ROYAL ANGELA (5) (J) 11-14. J. Jordan (11) 30
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15. 12 ROYAL ANGELA (5) (J) 11-14. J. Jordan (11) 30

2.45 SEE YOU THEN NOVICES HURDLE (22.57; 2m 110y) (14)

1. 124 EMBLEM (5) (J) 11-14. M. Henderson (5) 30
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3.15 CORRIERE NOVICES CHASE (22.58; 2m 110y) (11)

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3.45 GAYE RIBB NOVICES HURDLE (22.59; 2m 110y) (17)

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4.15 WAYWARD LAD NOVICES HURDLE (22.59; 2m 110y) (14)

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4.45 RED RUM INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (Div 1; 22.59; 2m) (15)

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Chief Constable sweetie, you were wonderful

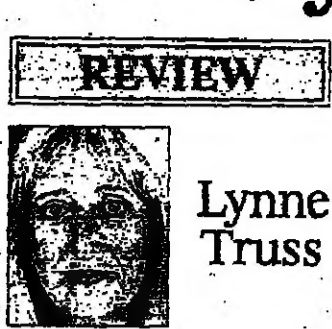
Sometimes one yearns for the days when senior policemen took a harder view of criminals. It's a long time since I heard the word "villains", for example. Nowadays, when asked to appear on television and opine about crime, they trot out their A-level sociology. Soundbites — crime's link with unemployment, the importance of "changing the attitudes" of the "underclass". Whether they are in competition with each other for this starry role is of course never disclosed, but it's interesting to see how many of them manage to appear. Last night I counted a dozen. At police conventions these days, they must gossip in corners like hives, and pass remarks like "Missed you on Panorama, Clive." "Oh, they did ask me, but I was busy." Unconvincing, everyone says "Oh," and "Linn," the other "Linn" starts. "Well, that's not what I heard." But the peaked-cap chorus line

were certainly in tune with last night's *Network First* (ITV), Denis Tuohy's *Frontline Britain*, which concludes next week, set out to expose lawlessness as endemic to poverty and unemployment, and made a very good list of it. It hardly needed all these policemen agreeing with each other, with sincere expressions of concern. Concentrating on three areas — in Tyneside, south London and Bradford — Tuohy's picture was all the more convincing for its simplicity. It was, in fact, a very good picture. Like the criminals themselves, you began to see the process of arrest as an absurd irrelevance. When everybody strips empty houses, it seems almost unfair to single someone out, even when caught red-handed in the living room with the lead pipe.

Yet, on the other hand, the police must learn not to assume (for example) that every black youth in Britain is a mugger. The most

engrossing section of Tuohy's film showed "Operation Eagle Eye", in which (theoretically) advanced surveillance replaces random stop-and-search. But the only real flame of hope was offered in the Bradford experiment, where the police are not dealing with the problem alone. Shots of bulldozers confirmed that some building is going on: a bit of job creation was also mentioned. Thus it fell to the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire to get the final word. His Top Cop hotline will certainly be hot this morning. "Well done, Keith. I really mean it."

As all journalists know, it is sometimes convenient to blur the background while highlighting the main story, and thus it was with last night's *Public Eye* (BBC2), which admittedly concerned a great scandal. An American funeral corporation is mounting a takeover of our under-



Lynne Truss

taking business. Its considerable commercial success is based on the cynical exploitation of bereaved people. *Public Eye* got hold of its sales handbook and talked to a former employee. These guys will sell you a funeral before you're dead. They are buying up the crematoriums, and sending shockingly emotive poems to relatives who neglect their duty to the ashes. The poem starts: "Scatter

me not to restless winds, / Nor toss my ashes to the sea. / Remember now those years gone by / When loving gifts I gave to thee."

All this was truly alarming and deserved this well-researched programme, but it overlooked an important point: that if the American operation is overtly cynical, the novelty is in the overtness. Undertaking is a very cynical business. It offers a service everybody needs but which is obscured by taboo until the awful moment it is required, when money is the last thing on your mind. As a spokesman from the Consumers' Association pointed out, the customer buying a funeral is oppressed by grief, unfamiliar with the prices and in no position to shop around. The bereaved think it indecent to haggle. The average price of a basic funeral is now £1,200.

Still, this American company was well mailed by *Public Eye*. "You've got to get 'em before their

tears dry" ran the instructions to salesmen. You can't get more explicit than that. However, there was an obvious upside to this invasion of bad taste: if the market becomes openly competitive, prices may come down. Already, the dry-stone walls and a few sheep, basically. But Dr Preston (Simon Shepherd) last night rounded up some rather pallid new locums (one of them Saskia Wickham, formerly Clarissa) and off we went again, tra-la, with a

rather good story about a proud roofer with a brain tumour.

In America, the turnover in some soap operas is so great that when an actor leaves, the character is simply played by someone else. Audiences accept this quite quickly. It would save an awful lot of fuss if we adopted this system here. Instead, in the interests of curious realism, Dr Preston pretended last night that he'd had a postcard from Jack and Beth in Africa, which was quite sad, really.

Literally resurrected from the grave was Gordon Brittas (Chris Barrie), the man of all men who deserved no second chance at life, but there you are. Even people who loathe fate must admit that *The Brittas Empire* (BBC1) is supremely well crafted, and last night's energetic episode was one of the best. It is the true successor to *Are You Being Served?* — an observation which you can take whichever way you like.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (1420S)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (Cable) (45577)

9.00 News Extra (Cable) (45147S)

9.20 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (300288S)

9.45 Kiddy (s) (746387S)

10.30 Good Morning (s) (6000S)

12.00 News (Cable) and weather (6493867)

12.30pm Turnabout (594035S)

12.50 Going for a Song (s) (3045S)

1.00 One O'Clock News (Cable) and weather (4884S)

1.30 Regional News and weather (7707373S)

1.40 Neighbours (Cable) (s) (3488119S)

2.00 Peabody MME (s) (3138770S)

2.40 Snowy River — the McGregor Saga (s) (441954S)

3.30 Mosaic (745022S) 3.55 Bites (s) (187011S) 4.10 Bites (s) (33552S)

4.35 Out of Time (Cable) (s) (488044S)

5.00 Newsround (Cable) (s) (458933S)

5.10 Blue Peter (Cable) (s) (116720S)

5.25 Neighbours (s) (Cable) (s) (56573S)

6.00 Six O'Clock News (Cable) and weather (51S)

6.30 Regional News magazines (367S)

7.00 This is Your Life. Michael Aspel opens the Big Red Book on another notable life (Cable) (s) (768S)

7.30 Here and Now. Anastasia Cooke meets forgotten victims of the Gulf War, and Mark Easton reports on the latest setback to hit the housing market (Cable) (s) (75S)

8.00 How Do They Do That? Eamonn Holmes and Janine Hull present the programme with the answers. This week they find out how the new Hollywood movie, *Toy Story*, was made "without cameras", how a British soldier gave up the Army to look after Bosnian orphans, and how a group of citizens got a mine of their own (Cable) (s) (22157S)

8.50 Points of View (Cable) (s) (26004S)

8.55 Party Political Broadcast by the Labour Party (263312S)

9.00 Nine O'Clock News (Cable), regional news and weather (384S)

9.30 Silent Witness. Amanda Burton stars as an outcast forensic pathologist (Cable) (s) (484867S)

10.20 Sportnight. Presented by Desmond Lynam, with Alan Hansen. Football: highlights of tonight's FA Cup fifth round replay, a preview of next week's League Cup match between Bayern Munich and Nottingham Forest; rugby union: a look ahead to Saturday's matches in the five nations' championship, with Scotland taking on England at Murrayfield and Ireland meeting Wales at Lansdowne Road (s) (79520S)

11.50 *The Experts* (198S) with John Trimmis, Aye-Gross, Charles Smith, Kelly Preston and Deborah Foreman. Two hip Americans believe they have been hired to open a trendy nightclub in Nebraska, but in reality they have been co-opted by the Russians, who want to learn about everyday American behaviour to train their spies. Directed by Dave Thomas (s) (44822S)

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6.30 Regional News magazines (367S)

BBC2

6.00am Open University: Maths (241240S)

6.25 Science (49191S) 8.50 An Historian at Work (581877S)

7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (883138S)

7.30 *Slingshot* (s) (Cable) (s) (58770S) 8.00 News (Cable) (s) (3381913S) 8.25 Poddington Peas (s) (404784S) 8.30 Open a Door (1730022) 8.40 The Record (s) (4240931S)

9.05 Daytime on Two: Mathsphere (451186S)

9.25 English Express (453142S) 9.45 Words and Pictures (467944S) 10.00 Playdays (58831S) 10.25 Nanterville (581884S) 10.45 Cat's Eyes (531445S)

11.00 Around Scotland (370732S) 11.20 Music Makers (757948S) 11.40 Ireland (2105751S) 12.00 TV6 (73436S) 12.30pm Working Lunch (8451S) 1.00 Geography (51944S) 1.25 Zog, Zog (2252312S) 1.40 Corrie Outside (348504S)

2.00 Poddington Peas (s) (1045867S) 2.05 Open a Door (1045813S) 2.10 The Andrew Neil Show (588142S) 3.00 News (Cable) and weather (240930S)

3.05 Westminster (Cable) (s) (429316S) 3.55 News (Cable) and weather (1480751S) 4.00 The Saturday Day (s) (400S) 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (584S) 5.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (Cable) (s) (791438S)

5.40 A Week to Remember (s) (763751S)

5.50 A Different Country Practice (265157S)

6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. Attached (Cable) (s) (32340S)

6.45 The O Zone (s) (34388S)

7.00 Assignment: Guardians of the Apocalypse (Cable) (s) (82615S)

7.45 Unrappable Yarn. A celebration of the best of British and American comic verse (s) (587490S)

8.00 Kan Hor's Hot Wolf. On the menu tonight are Whiffy crab and a special meal for Terry Wells. Business-style chicken (Cable) (s) (184S)

8.30 University Challenge. Southbank v Newcastle universities (Cable) (s) (3480S)

9.00 Yes, Minister (s) (Cable) (4190S)

9.30 Under the Sun: The Pilgrim's Gift (Cable) (s) (48240S)

10.20 The Mole Survival Guide. James Boleyn examines the causes of acid rains for impotence (Cable). Followed by: Women on Men (534157S)

10.30 Political Broadcast by the Labour Party (Cable) (s) (510751S)

10.35 Newsnight (s) (41912S)

11.20 Dark Secret. Following three men who suffer from impotence as they attend a clinic for treatment (Cable) (s) (24587S)

11.55 Newsnight (s) (41912S) 12.00 The Midwinter Hour (s) (2458S)

12.30-6.00am The Learning Zone

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Assignment Special: Guardians of the

Apocalypse (BBC2, 7.00pm)

Phil Rees's film offers a revealing glimpse inside Iran, where the regime of the hardline clerics is battling to preserve its ideological purity. Leading the opposition to Western liberal ideas is the Basij, or Mobilised Force for the Oppressed. Rees's report, based on six weeks of unrestricted filming, includes the first footage of the Basij in action as a Western journalist. Claiming 30,000 members and recruiting boys as young as 12, the Basij functions as a moral police. Women who do not wear the Islamic veil are stopped and cautioned. Western music and videos are banned. Rees also talks to opponents of the regime, including a writer, a university lecturer and a group of middle-class women who, in private, at least, are challenging the rigid dress code.

Beyond Belief (ITV, 8.30pm)

As it is going on live, this investigation into the paranormal conducted by Sir David Forde, is a series of live investigations. The certainty is that Uri Geller and Matthew Manning will be on hand to demonstrate their unusual powers. Geller appeared on a similar programme last year when his ventures into telepathy had viewers turning the switchboards. Manning is Britain's foremost psychic healer. He will attempt a laying-on of hands in the studio and, in what is claimed to be a television first, extend his powers to the audience at home. Supporting attractions include a young psychic from Israel and a man from Poland who claims to be a human magnet. Scopes may diminish the enterprise, but Forde and his production company know a ratings-rich subject when they see one.

Silent Witness: Long Days, Short Nights (BBC1, 9.30pm)

A series about a forensic pathologist was bound to feature the odd corpse or two but *Silent Witness* is not for the squeamish. Whether we need to see repeated shots of a human body in an advanced state of decomposition is another matter, even if it is a creation of the make-up department. When the said cadaver is linked to a story of witchcraft and black magic, it may be guessed that this is another sombre episode. It is not, however, by the regular characters. Amanda Burton's pathologist is strange and insensitive and the police, as represented by Clare Higgins and John McGlynn, are not disposed to offer light relief. But the script does have one overwhelming virtue. It compels you to wonder whether the murder suspect is guilty or not. The answer is revealed a week later.

Under the Sun: The Pilgrim's Gift (BBC2, 9.30pm)

The theme of Barbie Campbell Cole's documentary from Ethiopia is the power and innocence of faith. By any test of logic, thousands of poor villagers would not venture once a year on a hard and dangerous journey to the shrine of a saint about whom little is known. Still less would they offer up worldly goods which they can ill afford to part with, particularly as they are likely to be exploited by the shrine's corrupt keepers. Yet the 70-year-old tradition of pilgrimage to the shrine of the part-Muslim, part-Christian Sheikh Hussein seems as strong as ever. The film concentrates on the journey of an elderly married couple, undertaken barefoot and lasting six days. High, the husband, believes that as a young man he shed his sins in a serious illness. He has been giving thanks ever since.

Peter Waymark

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Free transfer to bring Rush romance to end

By PETER BALL

ONE of football's most rewarding partnerships is finally to end. Ian Rush will leave Liverpool at the end of the season on a free transfer after 15 years, interrupted only by a brief, unhappy 12 months in Italy. "He wants first-team football and that is understandable, bearing in mind his stature and ability," Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, said yesterday. "He would rather do that here with us, but he is not in the first team at the moment."

Rush, the club captain, has been out of the side since an injury cost him his place before Christmas. The subsequent success of the Collymore and Fowler partnership has kept him out of the side for the first time since he made his mark in 1981, and with the years no longer on his side, he accepts that the time is ripe for a move.

"I must look to my future, and so must Liverpool," Rush said yesterday. "It will be a massive wrench to leave, but I have reluctantly decided it is time to move on."

He would probably have preferred to leave immediately, but with Liverpool lacking cover as they pursue what would be his sixth championship, Rush has agreed to remain until his contract expires. "He will stay until the end of the season because he appreciates our position," Evans said. "That is not ideal for him, but he has always put the club first."

Rush, as always, was



Rush: time ripe to move

Le Tissier accepts his international isolation

MATTHEW LE TISSIER has come to terms with his prolonged absence from the England team and admits that, on his form this season, he has barely deserved a place in the plans of Terry Venables, the England coach (Russell Kempson writes). Though that is hardly a startling admission, it indicates that Le Tissier may have emerged from one of the darkest periods of his career.

Le Tissier, the Southampton forward, faces Swindon Town tonight in an FA Cup fifth round replay at The Dell. He has not featured in

Venables's thinking since the ill-fated fixture with Ireland in Dublin a year ago. His continued omission since has been attributed as the reason for his poor form this season. "It was frustrating for me not to get a chance with England but, as far as this season is concerned, I can't offer any excuses and I don't want to." "I can't put my finger on what's been going wrong, and I know I can produce much more than I have done, but I can at least see why I'm not getting a look-in with England. I just haven't been playing well."

straightforward. "The last thing I want is to leave on bad terms and that won't happen," he said. "The club have been great to me. We've come to an amicable agreement, and I'll play until the summer."

"It would have been easy to stay on the substitutes' bench and keep taking the money, but I'm not like that. I believe I have two years left, and I want to play football."

No one should doubt it. The announcement is certain to provoke a hectic race for the services of the most prolific goalscorer of modern times. This season Celtic, Leeds United, Manchester City and Middlesbrough from the Premiership all expressed interest, along with Sunderland, and the news that he will be available is likely to interest every English League club plus many in the Premiership.

Although Rush is 34, he is as lively now as in his prime, and if his pace has diminished slightly, that is relative. His pace is still sharp, his speed of thought and reaction unaffected by the years.

Rush joined Liverpool for £300,000 from Chester in 1980. He took a while to break into the side, only doing so after the late Bob Paisley told him to be more selfish in front of goal. Statistics of 207 goals in 324 games before the move to Italy in 1987, an astonishing return against modern defences, suggest that the message sank in, but from the start he was much more than simply a goalscorer.

With his pace and appetite for work, Rush was the first line of defence in perhaps Liverpool's greatest team — during the early 1980s — with Dalglish, Souness, Hansen and Lawrenson.

"We liked to play it out from the back, but we had to change our whole approach against Liverpool and kick it long and early because of the threat of Rush," Peter Shreeves, then Tottenham Hotspur's manager, once confided. Indeed, Rush's contribution was inestimable as Liverpool won the European Cup, the FA Cup three times and the League Cup in its various guises five times in his two spells. One club will now be very lucky.

□ Middlesbrough were told yesterday that Branco, the Brazil international full back, has received a work permit. The document had been delayed over doubts about whether he had played in enough of Brazil's games over the past two years to qualify, but confirmation from Mario Zagalo, the Brazil coach, removed the objection. Branco hopes to make his debut against Everton on Saturday.

The decision will raise eyebrows at Upton Park and Goodison, with both West Ham and Everton having respective requests for permits for the Dumitrescu and Marc Hotigier rejected.

Ball speaks out, page 44
Jones in frame, page 44

Tendulkar's brilliance eclipsed in Australia's classic triumph



Mark Waugh sweeps Raju for a boundary on his way to 126 against India yesterday. Australia won the outstanding match of the tournament by 16 runs

World Cup ignited by Waugh

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON
IN BOMBAYBOMBAY (Australia won
toss): Australia (2pts) beat
India by 16 runs

AUSTRALIA stared India full in the face last night, and India blinked. This was hard, unrelenting cricket, and there is no team in the world that can match Australia for hardness, or is so well-endowed with match-winners. So far, the preliminary games of this World Cup have been squibs. This was a rocket.

Where does one start? With Mark Waugh's superb century, or Tendulkar's bewitching 90? With Fleming's five wickets, or Warne's nerve under pressure? How well he bowled. Perhaps it should be with Taylor's captaincy as the mercury rose in this hot-house, so responsive was it to his team's requirements, so assured. The richness of performance, the variety of skills, made this game a one-day classic.

Let us start with Waugh, surely the most beautiful batsman anywhere when the

mood takes him. Yes, beautiful. Talent runs in his blood no less freely than it does in Tendulkar's, even if he has often showered his gifts without care or moderation. He has now made 256 runs in this World Cup, becoming the first man to record successive centuries in the competition. For a while yesterday he was the restrained partner, as Taylor rattled to an attractive fifty, but there was nothing shy about the way he sustained the innings. There were wonderful strokes to all parts of the ground, and the crowd did not withhold its appreciation.

Waugh's vulnerability has always been part of his charm. He makes 70s that are worth hundreds if pleasure is the litmus-test, and happily there are signs that he intends to knuckle down. His class, allied to brother Steve's toughness, would make a frightening compound. Lucky Australia, to have them both.

The opening stand of 103 in 22 overs was a masterpiece of one-day cricket. There was nothing remote, flashy or hurried about it. Waugh and Taylor punished the bad balls,



Troubled Stewart
Strang strikes

worked the gaps, and supplied the backbone that India, who lost three wickets in the first 14 overs despite scoring at an identical rate, lacked.

When Waugh was run out, one of five men to depart that way, attempting a second run to deep square leg, he had made 126 from 135 balls, with three sixes and eight fours. It was not his fault that Australia subsided in the last five overs, when seven wickets fell for 26, the last four, astonishingly, to the final balls of the innings.

Then Fleming revealed his hand. He was called into the side to replace McDermott and, in the absence of the injured Reiffel, he could not waste the new ball. He did not. He was relieved after seven overs, having dismissed Jadeja leg-before, and bowled Kamble and Azharuddin.

The wicket of Azharuddin, who played on, pulling a slower ball, was vital. In eight overs, the India captain had helped Tendulkar to add 63 as the young champion launched the most thrilling counter-attack. This was an extraordinary passage of play as Tendulkar locked horns with a fine bowler, McGrath, and a great one, Warne, taking from the crowd — his crowd — what he needed. These moments do not occur often, and they are rarely forgotten.

Think of Callas at Covent

Garden, or Olivier at the Old Vic. That is how Tendulkar stands in regard to this ground. When Olivier played Othello, he used to walk to the front of the stage before delivering his opening lines. When asked what he was up to, he replied: "I'm smelling the audience." Tendulkar's nostrils are also sensitive. Two strokes past mid-on's left hand were simply sensational. McGrath, whose first four overs included three maidens, was dispatched for 27 in the next two. Warne conceded ten off his first over. Bombay, all of India, was drunk with delight.

Tendulkar enjoyed his moments of luck. McGrath parried a fierce straight drive, and Law, making ground from mid-off towards a miscued drive, got his left hand to a difficult chance. But there was no mistaking the range, the utter daring, of this incredible innings.

Even when Tendulkar went in that unusual way, stumped

off a wide, Manjrekar and Mongia kept India in pursuit. Mark Waugh, bowling off breaks, had got the vital wicket: it was his day. Warne, brought back at the appropriate moment, took the edge of Mongia's bat with a perfectly pitched leg break, and when Taylor called on Steve Waugh, the seventh bowler, Manjrekar immediately tickled a catch to Healy.

Australia kept their nerve admirably, Fleming and Steve Waugh gently concluding the proceedings. Mark Waugh won his second man-of-the-match award, and anyone who upstages Tendulkar here deserves a bigger gong than that.

Jason Gillespie, a left-arm fast bowler from South Australia, will join the Australia party later this week, as McDermott's replacement. He will probably not be needed, if they are practising their scales right now, just wait until the concert starts.

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MURRAYFIELD
SHOWDOWN

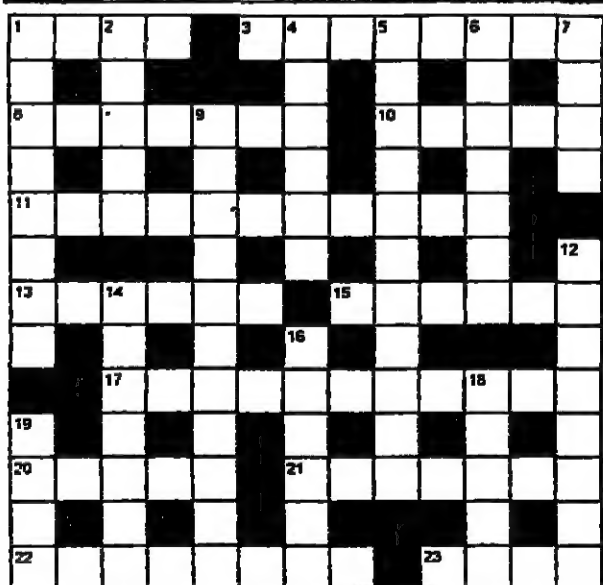
They see themselves as being superior, condescending and arrogant, but that's not just to us, it is to the whole world. They tend to think they are the masters of everything, whether it be soccer, cricket, rugby, economics or politics."

Jim Telfer, Scotland coach, on the English Page 43

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TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 716

ACROSS

- 1 Burrow (for food); cheer (for) (4)
- 3 King David, as author (8)
- 8 Glazed earthenware (7)
- 10 Permit (5)
- 11 Firework, showers with sparks (5,6)
- 13 Rantle; decay (6)
- 15 One-room flat (6)
- 17 (Comfortable) middle class (11)
- 20 Meaning: snow heap (5)
- 21 Confusing, muddling (7)
- 22 Heap curses on (8)
- 23 Gentled (4)

DOWN

- 1 The rabbit (4-4)
- 2 Repugnance (5)
- 4 Oscillate up and down (3-3)
- 5 What a surprise! (2,3,6)
- 6 State of bad health (7)
- 7 Urban settlement (4)
- 9 Illogical conclusion (3,8)
- 12 Power (5)
- 14 Exalted, superb (7)
- 16 Horrified (6)
- 18 NW Irish county; its main town (5)
- 19 Boundary; advantage (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 715

ACROSS: 1 Mimicry 5 Taxi 9 Chain 10 Rancous 11 Put the wind up 12 Ghetto 13 Ascend 16 Surveillance 19 Inches 20 Stake 21 Yoyo 22 Erratum
DOWN: 1 Mace 2 Measure 3 Constituency 4 Yorker 6 Avoid 7 Inspired 8 Julius Caesar 12 Gossip 14 Enchant 15 Elysed 17 Ruddy 18 Beam

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD NO 711

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND
ACROSS: 2 Micawber 6 Subdue 8 Obtain 9 Bubble.
10 Nasal 12 Corner shop 16 Incumbency 18 Lucrative 20 Illust 21 Unique 22 Twelve 23 Tea party
DOWN: 1 Put-upon 2 Meteoric 3 Albino 4 Braus 5 Rankle 7 Debonair 11 Appetite 13 Humility 14 Achieve 15 Flair 17 Nebula 19 China
1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic or international network is G Deer, Boxhill, East Sussex.
2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic network is R J Armstrong, Cambridge. All flights subject to availability.

Super League stalemate

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

IF Sir Richard Scott wished to busy himself after the arms-to-Iraq inquiry, he could turn to the equally impenetrable war in rugby league. For Super Gun read Super League, on the point of dismantlement in Australia after the latest court decree. Meanwhile, the European version remains primed and ready to fire next month.

Last week's judgment deeming the breakaway Super League in Australia unlawful raised more questions than answers. One certainty did emerge yesterday, however. Super League has been served a temporary injunction and will not kick off as scheduled on Friday.

The picture is one of confusion, farce and bitterness bordering on anarchy. Of the eight rebel clubs ordered by the court to return to the establishment fold of the Australian Rugby League (ARL), none has so far done so. This could yet scupper the start of the ARL season on Friday. It

also leaves around 200 Super League players in limbo.

If he cannot play for Canberra in Super League, Laurie Daley, Australia's stand-off half, said that Australian Rules Football was a possible option. Playing in England is another alternative.

Reverberations from the Sydney court are being felt by club treasurers in England. They foresaw a £3 million jackpot for the four European sides reaching play-offs with the four leading Australian teams. Still, a show of confidence was produced yesterday by Bradford Bulls for the benefit of their new sponsor, Compaq Computers Ltd.

Brian Smith, an Australian who bailed out Sydney St George during the ARL Super League battle last year to take up the coaching appointment at Bradford, was optimistic. "The ARL might not have always made right decisions, but at the core of their philosophy is wanting to do right by the game. I believe

they are very excited by the play-offs proposed by Super League, so suggestions they are out of the window may be premature," he said.

Compromise is the obvious solution but, with the Rugby Football League prepared to enter the legal minefield to try to save the play-offs and Great Britain's tour of Australasia in October, the ARL pronouncing Super League dead and Super League insisting it will still start this year. It is some way off.

The backers of Super League, News Limited, part of The News Corporation, parent company of The Times, will apply for a stay of proceedings next week. "Our commitment to our players, their contracts and our vision of Super League remains rock solid," Lachlan Murdoch, News Limited's deputy chief executive, said.

The ARL hopes otherwise. "I think, once we get together, sanity will prevail," Ken Arthurson, its chairman said.